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FAITH AND REASON IN RELIGION

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ETC.

FAITH AND REASON IN RELIGION

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PREFACE

THE question of the relation of faith to reason, and the respective importance which attaches to each, is an old and recurring one. The attempts made to define the relationship have varied according to the values ascribed and the functions assigned to the two factors. Hence the way in which the problem was conceived and treated in the third century or in the eighteenth differs from the way in which it is handled to-day. The answers which satisfied the men of a bygone time do not satisfy us; for, though the problems themselves remain, we see them in an altered intellectual and spiritual perspective. The changes which the developing historic life brings with it impose on us the task of thinking out afresh the issues for ourselves. Some ages have felt the pressure of this problem more severely than others. But there can be no doubt that it presses hardly on our own age; for we live in days which, more than most, are haunted by the question of the validity of spiritual values and the truth of theological doctrines. The old method of solving religious difficulties by an appeal to an external authority falls now on unsympathetic ears, and is doomed to prove unfruitful. But the path of free and independent discussion is always open, and this is the line the writer has endeavoured

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to follow. In these pages the rights of reason and the claims of faith are frankly recognised, and an effort has been made to do justice to both.

The most direct treatment of the place of faith and reason in religion is contained in the first essay. The substance of it was originally delivered as the Murtle Lecture in the University of Aberdeen, but the lecture has been revised and very considerably expanded. Though the other essays are on different religious subjects, the problem discussed in the opening paper will be found to reappear in new connections, and the principle is reaffirmed that faith and reason are really complementary, and neither should be sacrificed to the other.

Most of the essays in this volume have been given in the form of lectures on one occasion or another. None of them, however, has previously appeared in print, with the exception of the paper on " Evolution and the Finality of the Christian Religion." This was published in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1925, and the editor is thanked for permission to republish it.

G. G.

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FAITH AND REASON IN RELIGION

I

KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

I.—Introductory

THE rights of reason and the claims of faith are old themes. Much has been written on them, and the relation of faith to reason has been the subject of many controversies. Yet one cannot say that the results have been commensurate with the energy displayed in the discussion. The protagonists on either side have commonly failed to do justice to the elements of truth in the contentions of those who were opposed to them, with the consequence that agreement has not been reached. The ordinary rationalist who girds against the claims of faith is often destitute of any large view of the meaning of faith and its function in human life : he is prone to regard it merely as the fertile parent of a great brood of superstitions ; while reason seems to him the one sure light amid the darkness, the sole antidote against the vagaries of blind credulity and unbridled imagination. In this spirit, more than a generation ago, the late Professor Clifford wrote : " It is always wrong to believe anything on insufficient evidence." In a court of law the

remark might pass without criticism, for here the word "evidence" has a well-defined meaning. But regarded from a general point of view the proposition is by no means clear, and at once provokes questions. What precisely is meant by evidence? and when is evidence to be judged sufficient? We may hold that it is fit and right that we should have some justification for what we believe, but it does not follow that the only justification which is admissible is one which can be cast in the form of a logical demonstration. There may be an inner conviction which is itself "sufficient evidence" on which to act. In fact if, in practice, we were always to be guided and controlled by a purely logical criterion, we should seldom act at all. But we constantly act, and notably where the future is concerned, without being able to assign reasons for action which are logically cogent.

The view we are considering really involves impossible demands. To examine and test things by the light of reason is right, so long as one is in a position to do this. But we have to face the problem how far we can advance on our human journey depending on this principle only. Not very far, I think. Take the case of our reliance on our fellows, and our judgment of their trustworthiness. Judgments of this kind are essential: we cannot avoid making them; and yet they are not, and cannot be, based on any complete proof. We use tests, no doubt, to correct our instinctive feelings, but these tests always fall short of demonstration. And I venture to think that what is true here

is symptomatic of a wider truth, the truth, namely, that proof in the strict sense is never complete. Our deductive procedure always breaks short: there always comes a point when we have to accept something simply as given without being able to rationalise it. Thus the man of science is constantly confronted with unrationalised elements in the realm of nature.

In theology, as a rule, the disposition has been to shun any violent antithesis between faith and reason. By his acceptance of the reality and value of Divine Revelation the Christian theologian presupposes that the religious man has to recognise truths which he could not have reached by his own unaided powers. They must therefore be received in faith. On the other hand, he is not inclined to say that these truths, being divine, are irrational: he rather regards them as suprarational, beyond what reason can explicate here and now. Theology has usually no quarrel with natural knowledge, but it professes to go beyond it. For after knowledge has done its work there still remains an ample sphere for faith, and to faith alone is due the assurance of the truth of the more profound doctrines of the Christian religion. In other words, religion is justified by reason up to a point, but its deeper and more mysterious truths are apprehended by faith alone. And if we ask for a justification of this faith we are referred to authority, the authority of revelation as attested by the Church, the Word of God, or the Christian conscience.

If, at first blush, we seem to have here a good working relation between faith and reason, it is easy to see that the situation which emerges is perplexing and hard to defend. We have two principles in operation, reason on the one side, and faith leaning on authority on the other ; and if the one should be at discord with the other, how are the respective claims of each to be settled ? In the absence of any serious attempt to examine and appreciate the nature and functions of faith and reason, the common tendency has been to exalt the one at the expense of the other. The rationalistically minded person inclines to reject religious doctrines which receive no support from reason, while the good churchman vindicates the rights of faith to accept them, because they are grounded on authoritative revelation. Yet the arbitrary settlement of religious disputes by an appeal to authority inevitably provokes further questions ; and especially so when the authority is external, as in the case of a Church or Book. If it be said that these are authoritative because the Book contains, and the Church is the custodian of, a divine revelation, the further point emerges how we come to have the assurance that the revelation is real, and how we are to distinguish true revelation from that which falsely claims to be so. Now if, in dealing with this problem, you try to justify faith by an appeal to a criterion outside faith itself, faith cannot remain the final arbiter of the issue. In other words, if the authority which is said to justify faith is held to be established on rational evidence, then

the ultimate court of appeal is reason rather than faith. Consider, for example, this statement of Tillotson's: "Nothing ought to be received as a divine doctrine and revelation without good evidence that it is so; that is, without some argument sufficient to satisfy a prudent and considerate man." [1] This amounts to saying that reason will decide what is to be taken as revealed and what is not. Yet if the revelation purports to give doctrines which are not rational, we are involved in the paradox that reason in the end commends for our acceptance what is not reasonable. Nor are we likely to escape this inconsistency unless we come to some clear and coherent idea of the distinctive characters and spheres of faith and of reason.

In practice, theologians have commonly ignored considerations of the kind, and they have continued to press the claims of authority to determine what is to be received in faith. If it be admitted that the validity of religious authority cannot be demonstrated, we may be told it should at least be taken as a fact and in "natural piety." There need be no hesitation in admitting that authority plays a great part in life, and especially in the religious life. The child, for instance, begins by accepting religious truths on the authority of the teacher who communicates them. But the trouble has been that the principle of authority in religion has been so extended that it is made to cover a great deal which does not really come within its scope. The result was to involve the principle itself in

[1] As quoted by Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 185.

suspicion and discredit. The extreme case is, of course, the Church of Rome, where divine authority is claimed for its whole organisation, doctrine, and ritual. And if other churches have not asserted so much, they have at least made greater demands on the principle than it is fitted to bear. I am here thinking of the position claimed for the theological developments of Christianity, which, formulated in doctrines and finally approved as dogmas, have been set forth in the creeds. These, it is said, embody the revealed truths contained in the faith of many generations, and they have to be accepted in faith by us. The truths in question are authoritative, we are told, because divinely grounded and attested, and therefore are entitled to our allegiance. Accordingly the idea long prevailed, and to some extent still exists, that the object of Christian faith is the authoritative doctrines which form the official creed of a church, and that a man qualifies himself for becoming a Christian by accepting them. Beyond doubt the notion has proved a stone of stumbling, and is responsible for a good deal of aloofness and even antagonism to institutional Christianity. Many argue, and for this we cannot blame them, that they should not be invited to believe propositions which are not intelligible to them, or in which they feel no interest, or which they even think are probably untrue. And we may agree that the gateway to the spiritual life, though narrow, cannot be hedged in and guarded after this fashion.

From the historical point of view we can under-

stand how such claims came to be made ; but it is clear to us to-day that they were wrong in principle, and were bound in the long run to react against the true interests of religion itself. In the first place, the scope of authority is misunderstood, and, in the second place, the nature of faith is misconceived. On the first point, though we admit there is a divine authority in the Christian religion we cannot extend the principle so as to include under it the whole body of theology which has been elaborated as an interpretation of Christian experience. Doctrines are the outcome of human reflection, and they have been influenced by the intellectual environment of the age. Men were not divinely safeguarded from error in developing them, nor were they delivered from the possibility of drawing inferences which were mistaken : the lack of consistency between doctrines is suggestive of human limitations. For these reasons it is illegitimate to claim the same authority for dogmas that may be claimed for the religious experience out of which they were developed. But, in the second place, we do injustice to the nature of faith if we suppose it is primarily directed to doctrinal propositions. It can only be in a secondary and derivative sense that faith is concerned with doctrines. For example, an individual has faith in God, and he subsequently finds that certain doctrines express the character and action of the God in whom he believes. In this indirect sense we may say he has faith in the doctrines, but the faith is secondary and depends on the original faith in God.

In general it is true that doctrines can only enter into the faith of the individual in so far as they express elements of value of which he is conscious in his own spiritual life. But, as a matter of experience, it is never the case that men arrive at a Christian faith by intellectually affirming the propositions of a creed. To hold for true is one thing: the vital faith which is the ground of a genuine religious experience is another. We are far nearer the truth if we say that the religious man reaches doctrine through faith than that he reaches faith through doctrine. A fuller consideration of the nature and object of religious faith will make this clearer.

Before, however, discussing this problem, I think it will be helpful for us to see how the problem of the nature of faith and its relation to knowledge and reason has developed historically. This will enable us better to appreciate the situation in which we find ourselves at present.

II.—Historical Development of the Contrast of Faith and Knowledge

Religious faith as an experience precedes any theory of its nature. And the problem of its relation to knowledge could only arise after men had gained some acquaintance with the meaning and method of knowledge; for this is implied in the consciousness of the contrast between knowledge and faith. Hence in the development of the Christian religion the problem only became a living issue

after the influence of Greek philosophy had made itself felt in the life of the Church. To thinkers especially who were familiar with the Platonic conception of knowledge as systematic insight in contrast to imperfectly grounded opinion, it became a question how Christian faith, which claimed to be true, was related to knowledge so conceived. This problem was first deliberately treated by the Alexandrian theologians, who had been trained in the school of Platonism. To Clement and to Origen the distinction was in the main one of degree : it stood for different stages in the development of the mind. Faith is knowing, but it is undeveloped knowing, and it has its crown and fulfilment in the γνῶσις or rational insight of the Christian thinker. There is here no analysis in order to bring out the specific quality of faith as a psychical act : faith and knowledge are conceived as stages in the upward movement of the mind. Or, to change the image, knowledge is the mature fruit of which faith is the early growth.

In Augustine the influence of Platonism is also very discernible. He too makes faith the normal stage to knowledge : *praecedit fides, sequitur intellectus*. The soul, he holds, has a capacity to know the truth ; and what we possess in the security of faith we should try to make clear in the light of reason. Yet for Augustine, the churchman and the Catholic theologian, the *via auctoritatis* stands over against the *via rationis*, and he fails to reconcile their respective claims. The attitude of Augustine continues in mediæval theology, the motto of

which was, *fides quaerens intellectum*. In this connection one recalls Anselm's *credo ut intelligam*, and his saying that after we have been established in the faith we should strive to apprehend by reason what we have accepted on trust. But when we come to Thomas Aquinas we find an explicit recognition that there are truths of authoritative or revealed religion which transcend reason, though they do not contradict it. Such, for example, are the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, which are guaranteed by revelation. This dualism between authority and revelation, which haunted mediæval theology, grew into an incurable breach, for which the only help seemed to be the " double truth." But if what is true in philosophy may be false in theology, and *vice versâ*, then faith in consistent thinking is dissolved and reason ceases to be the *ancilla fidei*.

With Luther, under Pauline influence, faith became an act of personal trust in the forgiving love of the God manifest in Christ. He is fully conscious that faith is an act of the whole personality : it is not a mere " frigid assent," not a matter of intellect pure and simple. Rightly conceived it was a work of God in the soul, and Luther declared it belonged to a sphere " above and underneath all dialectical apprehension." The same sharp differentiation of religious faith from rational insight appears in Pascal, who proclaimed that " the heart has its reasons which the reason knows nothing of." On the other hand, the philosophical movement which began with Descartes, and was con-

tinued in Spinoza, Leibniz, and Locke, gave no recognition to faith in its specific character and emphasised the rational side of religion. "Blessedness," says Spinoza, "consists in love towards God"; and he adds, "this arises from knowledge." An arid rationalism unredeemed by any touch of mysticism greets us in Deism, with its apotheosis of clear and distinct ideas and its endeavour to exhibit the essence of true religion in certain rational ideas or universal notes. Nor does Butler, with all his sanity and sagacity, do justice to the nature of faith. In the absence of any complete certainty in religion man must act on the probabilities of the situation; and, in deciding so to do he exercises faith, according to Butler. The world in which we live is a world of half-lights, and so the religious man will be guided by what is probable. In thus supposing that faith should be determined, not by its own intrinsic character but by an outward balance of evidence, Butler showed that he was dominated by the intellectualistic tradition.

As an introduction to modern discussions of faith and reason the work of Kant is of crucial importance, and it is still influential to-day. He sought to solve the problem by deliminating the spheres of faith and knowledge. According to Kant the element of sense-perception was essential to knowledge, and the knowing activity was restricted to the establishing of determinate relations between perceptions given under the forms of space and time. Hence science, in interpreting the causal connections of phenomena, yields valid knowledge.

But science is not the whole of life. Man is a being who acts as well as knows; and for Kant the moral consciousness and its objects do not come under the dominion of the phenomenal world in space and time. Man as practical reason or will belongs to a transcendent or noumenal world, and, in acting under the conception of duty and in striving after ethical ends, he makes demands on that real and intelligible world. In other words, there are postulates of the practical reason or will, postulates which justify themselves because they are bound up with the working of the moral consciousness whose reality cannot be doubted. As moral postulates, then, Kant finds the reality of God, Freedom, and Immortality assured. How, then, do we apprehend these realities, since they transcend the realm of valid knowledge? The answer is, by faith, for faith is the organ or faculty by which we establish contact with a supra-sensuous or real world. For Kant faith is distinguished from knowledge by its sphere and object, and he does not discuss its psychological nature beyond connecting it with the practical reason or will. Still, in marking out the spheres of faith and knowledge, and in defining the kind of objects with which they respectively deal, Kant made an important and influential contribution to the subject.

But can reason rest satisfied with this contrast of knowledge and faith? with this division of objects into phenomenal and noumenal or real? Must it not seek a unity behind the diversity?

Reason, Kant admits, is impelled to seek after the totality of conditions in experience, and is inspired by the idea of systematic unity. But when it strives to exhibit this unity as a realised fact, it fails; completeness escapes our grasp, and while the ideal of system may inspire and guide our thinking, it can never be the consummation of our thought. Just because knowledge is so severely limited faith cannot be resolved into it.

Kant's treatment of the problem was extraordinarily suggestive, but his solution of it raised fresh questions. It was natural that his theory of the limits of knowledge should be challenged, and the capacity of reason to make explicit the systematic unity of things should be proclaimed. This was the line followed by the Speculative Idealism of which Hegel was the chief representative. The ideal of rationalising the universe, it was said, could be attained by treating reason as a long development, moving from the simplest sense-experience, through all the stages of mind, to its goal in the fully articulated self-consciousness which embraced all differences in its systematic unity. In this comprehensive philosophy faith stands for a provisional point of view. Faith is the attitude of the ordinary consciousness in religion, and it uses symbols and figurative representations (*Vorstellungen*) which it does not examine and criticise. Hence the truth of what faith holds is only found at the higher stage of speculative thought where these representations are criticised and made adequate. Hegel's theory

has points of contact with the views of the Alexandrian Fathers. In both cases faith is undeveloped reason, reason in the making, and so a stage on the way to rational insight. This far-reaching idealism raises many difficulties, but I confine myself now to one observation. In his treatment of faith Hegel fails to recognise that faith has a specific character of its own. And that character, as we shall show later, is intimately related to the affective and conative life. With the best will in the world it is impossible to reduce feeling and conation to mere stages in the evolution of thought or reason. They prepare the way for thinking, but they are not identical with it. To insist on the identification is to do injustice to the affective and conative side of human experience, to which faith is vitally related.

After the influence of Absolute Idealism had waned, an attempt was made to discuss afresh the relation of faith to knowledge. The lines followed were those laid down by Kant, and this implied the differentiation of the provinces of theory and of practice. In the phraseology which by-and-by became current it was necessary to distinguish between judgments-of-fact and judgments-of-value, the natural sciences dealing with the former, while ethics and religion were concerned with the latter. The two forms of judgment, it was held, sprang from different activities of the spirit, the one originating in the cognitive and the other in the emotional and conative side of human nature. In the hands of the theologian

Ritschl the distinction of fact and value was emphasised, and, in opposition to rationalism, he contended that the religious consciousness worked essentially with judgments of value. In other words, the truths of religion do not stand for intellectual propositions, but for values experienced by the believing mind. We apprehend these values and judge of them by faith. Thus it became common to speak of two orders of knowledge, the scientific and the religious, which were sharply contrasted and, so to speak, moved on different planes. Yet this solution of the problem, while it appeared to safeguard the citadel of faith from the assaults of science, had its own drawbacks. Was faith, though claiming to be true, independent of fact ? Was the truth asserted simply the sense of experienced value ? If so, the consciousness of value varied with individuals, and the danger seemed imminent that religious knowledge or faith would become purely subjective.[1] Ritschl sought to escape this consequence by insisting on revelation as an objective historic fact which guaranteed the value-judgments of faith. But, we ask, how is revealed truth to be distinguished from what is not revealed and yet claims to be so ? Obviously, on the given premises the answer would have to be that this distinction rests on a difference of experienced value, and the old difficulty remains. Again, the rigid separation of

[1] The perilous affinity of the Value-Theology to the Wish and Illusion-Theology has often been remarked. *Vide, e.g.*, Wernle, *Einführung in das theologische Studium*, p. 345.

scientific from religious knowledge raises a further issue. The religious mind does not entirely surrender the natural world to the man of science on the plea that all its interests are centred in a higher realm. From the religious point of view, the supernatural enters into the natural order, investing it with spiritual meaning. And if a dualism between scientific and religious knowledge is admitted, it might be argued that religion is justified in asserting the reality of miracle on grounds of value, while science is justified in rejecting it on the ground of rigid causal connection. A dualism of this kind does not work, and two diverse orders of knowledge will not harmonise with the unity of human nature. And if the distinction of theoretical and practical reason is due to Kant, yet Kant never committed himself to the view that there were two diverse kinds of reason.

It is obvious, then, that religion is not well served by those who oppose faith and reason in this extreme fashion. As men became conscious of this they felt that some further readjustment of claims was needed. At present, no doubt, the tendency is to minimise the claims of reason. In writers like the late William James this takes the form of a reduction of religion to the working of non-rational feelings and subconscious impulses. In Bergson it issues in the glorification of a supra-rational intuition. Still, this polemic against intellectualism, though exaggerated, has helped to make clear the importance of the feeling and

conative life, and has made thinkers realise better the part it plays in religion. None the less, faith and knowledge cannot be severely separated if we are to be true to experience; the problem is to show they can be satisfactorily related. Here we must begin by considering more closely the nature and working both of faith and reason.

III.—The Nature and Genesis of Faith

There is a well-known description of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer speaks of it as "The substance (or assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence (or proving) of things not seen." Here we find the important truth that faith transcends what is immediately given; it goes beyond the seen and tangible; it is forward-looking, directed to a value to be realised, to a good that is hoped for. This reference to value shows plainly the intimate connection of faith with the seeking and striving nature of men. Were man a complete and satisfied being, did his environment fully suffice for his needs, faith would have no meaning for him. But here we must distinguish faith as based on the feeling and volitional life from a common usage of the term "belief." To believe may merely mean to hold for true on satisfactory evidence, as I believe in the reality of the friend who is speaking to me. Or it may mean that I suppose or opine something for which the evidence is not complete (*cp.* Plato's δόξα). Here the process is mainly intellectual, as

when I believe or suppose that a certain theory accounts for particular phenomena, though I cannot prove it. This act of judgment clearly does not express all we mean when we say that we have faith (πίστις). Belief, taken in the sense of supposal, has a fluctuating character; the attitude is a provisional one and differs essentially from the full assurance of faith. Nor does supposal, though converted into intellectual conviction, make faith. My assent to certain doctrines because I judge them well attested, or because I think they explain some facts, is not an act of faith in the religious sense.

What, then, is the precise nature of faith? Now I believe, if we try to answer the question simply by studying faith in its highly developed forms, we are likely to miss something of the scope and significance of faith in human life. The Aristotelian dictum that we best enter into the meaning of a thing by considering its course of development is of value as a guide in method. The principle is now generally recognised, though it is not always put in practice. I venture to think a discussion of the kind in this specific case will serve to dispel any prejudice against faith on the plea that it makes an arbitrary demand; it will help to show that the faith-attitude, in its fully developed form, proceeds from the very character and tendency of life itself, and grows with the growth of life. On the other hand, if we ignore the genesis and evolution of faith and merely study developed faith in its contrast with

knowledge, there is a real danger that we shall miss its far-reaching significance and minimise its value. It would hardly have been practicable, for instance, to treat faith as a kind of undeveloped reason, which can ultimately be merged in reason, had there been a sympathetic study of the origins and functions of faith in human experience. A survey of the kind will fully bear out the contention of the late Canon Scott Holland, that "faith is an elemental energy of the human soul." [1]

In the lower forms of life we find conation or striving accompanied by the consciousness of feeling-changes. This conative activity reveals itself in the selection by the organism of those elements in the environment which it requires for the conservation of its life. From the first there is a forward-looking trend in the living being, and it is constantly engaged in dealing with situations in relation to the future. At this stage what we call instinct takes the place of intelligent prevision, and instinct always works in the interests of the conservation of the individual and the species. When human life supervenes on the basis of animal life, it carries within it this universal impulse towards conservation and betterment, but the previous instinctive direction towards the end is now qualified by a conscious awareness of the objects sought. Now, while instinctive selection survives in the organic processes in man, there is superimposed on this the conscious selection that is guided by interest, and which we

[1] *Vide* his essay on Faith in *Lux Mundi*, p. 8, *et passim*.

describe as purposive. Primitive men deal with the environment with reference to the needs of which they are conscious, and these needs issue from the incompleteness of life itself. After one want is gratified, a new want arises. Man at every stage of his development is ever seeking something; he "never is, but always to be blest," and his desires are the index of his character. Knowledge with primitive people is a purely instrumental function; it is not enjoyed for its own sake, but is employed to adjust means to ends, so that the savage may secure what he urgently wants. In primitive culture magic was the crude forerunner of science; and the vogue of magic in these early days is explained by the fact that it was deemed an effectual instrument for the satisfaction of human desires.

In these early activities of man it is evident that belief plays a large part. The savage firmly believes in the efficacy of his magic, in the fitness of the means he takes to secure food or to avert danger; and his belief is not shaken by apparent failures. Belief to the primitive man is easy and natural, for he has no organised body of knowledge by which to test or correct it. In fact, without a certain trustfulness in the means used, a certain assurance of the possibility of achieving ends, there would be no incentive for him to strive in one way rather than in another for goods desired. Now it seems to me that in the trust-attitude we have the basis on which the belief which is more specifically religious develops, though in itself

trust is not necessarily religious. How, then, does primitive trust become a religious attitude? We may conjecture that the "something more" of which we are in search will be found in subjective feeling on the one hand, and in the character of its object on the other. I doubt if it is enough to say, as Maier, for instance, does, that an experience becomes religious when the phenomenon in perception or representation is linked with a certain attitude of feeling.[1] Certainly the affective condition is essential; but there must be something in the object which goes to determine the feeling-attitude, and of this account has to be taken. In regard to the first point, I think that Otto and other writers who have emphasised the feeling of awe, the sense of mystery, the awareness of a presence, have directed attention to genuine features in the primitive religious experience, though one must be careful not to interpret the experience too much in terms of our own developed self-consciousness. But that there was something specific in the feeling out of which religion grew, something which differentiated it from other experiences, is not in question, and the word "awe" at least suggests something of its nature. On the other hand, the character of this feeling-experience must owe something to the representation or object to which it refers. And on this its religious quality depends, for not every form of awe can be designated religious. In this connection it seems important to lay stress on the

[1] H. Maier, *Psychologie des emotionalen Denkens*, p. 541.

truth that the religious object always lies beyond the immediate environment. The savage who reveres a stone or a claw as a fetish always believes it to be more than it outwardly appears; it contains an invisible spirit or power. In religion selection is operative, as it is in all life; man chooses the objects of his worship, and he chooses them because he differentiates them from the common things in his environment, since they contain a spirit or power. The religious feeling, therefore, is constantly qualified by a reference to something *beyond;* and though the spirits or *numina* of primitive religion fall within the natural order, they are not, properly speaking, ordinary objects of perception. Behind the visible stone, or tree, or spring the spirit lurks.

This mysterious aloofness, this distinction from the common things of sense-perception, fosters the sense of awe in the religious attitude. There is thus a negative or repelling element in the sacred which serves to differentiate the sacred object from other objects. Yet, if this were all, religion in the full sense would not be present, for religion has its positive side. It is a communion and fellowship with the divine: man is drawn to the spirits; they can do for him what he cannot do for himself; they can help him in time of need. And here the element of trust which man brings with him in the struggle with his environment receives a religious qualification by being related to a divine power. His primitive trust in the means

he uses to attain his ends is extended and referred to a power beyond himself. Over the field of early religion broods the shadow of gloomy fears, but it is well to remember that fear in itself cannot create the spirit of religion. Beside these fears, and implied in their existence, are human hopes and desires, and religious belief means reliance on powers which can bring these to fulfilment. Man trusts the spirits, and his trust is born of a dim sense of his limitations. Here is the living germ from which faith grows.

This primitive religious belief, as we have tried to describe it, of course, takes its object to be real; but it does not reach the object by any process that can fairly be called inference. There may be stimulus from the environment in the way of suggestions which play on the mind, but the object is more than the environment can explain, more than can be deduced from it. Certainly, phantasy or imagination, quickened by emotion, plays its part in representing the object, but in this it is largely determined and guided by the deep-rooted needs of which man is conscious. And these needs were broadly human: they were shared by man with his fellows. Hence the religious beliefs which emerge cannot be properly construed as the effects of his environment on man; they are rather to be understood as the reaction of man on his environment. They are the expression of his inner nature, a nature of which as yet he is only dimly conscious. As man comes to know himself and his needs better, he

will be able to give a better form to his religious representations.

At this early stage we cannot rightly contrast the apprehension of the religious object with the process of mind we call knowledge, for knowledge has not yet defined itself in contrast to belief. But perhaps we may discern the beginning of the contrast in the difference between religious belief and perception; for if we may speak of man knowing the objects in his environment by perceiving them, then we must distinguish these from the objects of his religious belief and say that he does not know the latter through the medium of sense-perception. They lie beyond the region of sense; they are more than objects of sense. They are posited by the spirit conscious of its needs, and they are not presented by the environment.

How, then, does this primitive belief and trust become faith in the sense in which we use the term? In its broad lines, the development of faith follows the development of human personality. And the latter becomes possible through the growing complexity of the social medium, for this brings about an increasing interaction between individuals within society and so elicits their higher capacities. Still, we have to ask what are the more specific elements which contribute to the evolution of faith. In an essay on *Faith* the late Mr. Bradley urged that the presupposition of faith is the emergence of doubt.[1] I admit that

[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, pp. 20, 25.

if we limit our view to fully-developed faith there is some truth in this contention, for faith, as an act of freedom and preference, takes cognisance of and excludes what conflicts with its own demands. On the other hand, if we take a wider outlook on the evolution of faith, we shall find that doubt is not a constant factor which conditions its growth. Doubt is the product of reflection, and its place in early culture is at most insignificant. It would be true—at least of the early stages of human history—to say with William James that man " believes as much as he can," and that without troubling to criticise what he believes. And I venture to think a study of the gradual genesis of the higher forms of religious trust gives little support to a theory that the process was always mediated by a conflict with doubts. The process was mainly conditioned by the emergence of higher needs within the human soul, needs which brought about the direction of the religious mind to higher objects.

More definitely, we have to connect the elevation of primitive trust to something higher with the emergence of ethical ideas and values. In consequence of the formation of richer and more complex social organisations as the outcome of the growing historic life, the personal life is expanded and enriched. There is an advance in self-consciousness, and the simple morality of custom which marks the tribal stage of culture is transformed into a conscious morality. Material goods are no longer the sole objects of desire and the

ethical values assume a new importance and a wider range. Man now recognises that these have a claim upon him which is not conditioned by external circumstances and considerations of prudence. Especially significant is the recognition that the ethical good cannot be a merely relative notion which is limited in its range and validity by the varying facts and situations with which man has to deal. There is something absolute in its character and claims, and this distinguishes it from all rules of expediency. In truth, man is now conscious of the existence of a higher realm, a moral and spiritual order to which his will must conform, and with this consciousness there goes a great spiritual uplift. The reality of a transcendent order breaks in on the soul, and so there follows the thought of an end in the transcendent world.

Is religious faith, then, simply a direction of the mind to these ends and values and an apprehension of them as real? It implies this, but I think it is something more. Students of the Philosophy of Religion will be familiar with the theory of Höffding, that religious faith is in essence faith in the conservation of values. The "something more" in this case is defined as conservation or persistence. Just as energy is conserved in the physical world, so does the religious man trust that values will be maintained in the historic process. A generalised principle of this kind is not relevant to the way in which faith has developed. The element of trust which lies

at the heart of faith is not explained on these lines. In religious experience the trust which grows into a spiritual faith is not directed to a principle, but to a power, and at the higher stages of this experience it is directed to a power that has a personal character. In other words, the religious consciousness would not recognise that its act of reliance is primarily a trust in the maintenance of values; it would proclaim that its confidence is in a Being who secures the conservation of values. If faith did not carry with it this personal reference, it is hard to see how it could have any assurance of its own justification; and apart from this sense of justification faith could not preserve its power in the struggle of life.

Our interpretation of the relation of faith to values will, therefore, proceed along another line. The religious consciousness, in its developed form, uses the ethical values to give meaning and content to the object towards which it is directed. The Power on which early man relied for securing his material needs is now defined as a moral and spiritual Being. The ethical values themselves are not intelligible apart from a personal life in which they are real and living; an impersonal value is something like a *contradictio in adjecto*. And when man has come to realise the transcendent character of the ultimate Good, he can only find satisfaction in the faith that this value is identical with the character of a supreme Reality regarded as personal. The true object of a developed religious faith is God, who is the con-

summation of all goodness. It is not an arbitrary act by which the religious mind envisages the object of its faith after the analogy of human personality. It may be granted the analogy is not perfect: God cannot be a person in exactly the sense in which men are persons. Still, under this figure is expressed a very real and firm conviction; for religious spirits are convinced that what they recognise to be highest in themselves—the spiritual and self-conscious life—must have a counterpart in the transcendent Ground of the universe. In making this claim religious faith is only making demands that are implied in its own character, for faith in its deepest and most intimate nature becomes possible on the ground of a personal relationship. You may, I grant, be convinced of the truth of a principle which you cannot prove, and this means faith of a kind; but a conviction like this has neither the warmth and inwardness, nor the spiritual quality, of a truly religious faith. The higher forms of trust are between persons, and God, the final object of religious trust, is the perfect Person.

The faith of which we have been speaking is the expression of the religious consciousness in its most developed form. We may term it the attitude of Christian faith. It now remains for us to consider how the faith-attitude contrasts with knowledge as it has evolved in the life of civilised society.

It is a truism to say that early man was impelled to know, not by intellectual curiosity, but by the

pressure of practical needs. He made trial of means to secure his immediate ends. By experimenting on his surroundings he made discoveries which he learned to use for his own purposes. He learned to produce fire by friction, and that fire was useful in preparing food ; or that certain herbs had a curative value. Devoid of any scientific idea of the relation of cause and effect, he yet came to know that certain results followed from certain antecedents, and in this way he came to be aware of uniformities in nature which he was able to use in his own interests. Some of these uniformities man apprehends almost instinctively, just as the animals do, but others he discovered through his own purposive intelligence. Out of the experimenting activity which reveals connections between given antecedents and given consequents, and by a rudimentary capacity to generalise, to make one experience typical of another, early man rises to the idea of the existence of various uniformities in his environment, and so takes the first step towards the development of what afterwards is called science. He is stimulated to seek this knowledge by the power which it gives him in dealing with things.

Out of this practical quest there emerges, with the growth of mind, a conception of knowledge which differs from the kind of knowing implied in sense-awareness or sense-perception. In the latter case individual objects are known simply as given, but in the former they are apprehended in their connections one with another as forming an

order which is constant in varying situations. By understanding this order, which he calls a "law," man can, in a given sphere, predict what will happen if certain conditions are fulfilled, and from particular events in his surroundings he can infer the "law" which connects them. In other words, generalising on the basis of causal relations observed in experience, men advanced to the conception of laws of nature, and in the light of these laws they interpreted the emergence of specific facts or events. Here, then, we have the notion of knowledge in the sense of what is commonly called explanation, and this explanation means that the mind passes beyond the outward appearance of things and apprehends them in their inner connection one with another. In principle, then, this method of knowing means a discernment of a unity underlying the outward differences of experienced facts, and it implies that we know objects when we interpret them in the light of the unity which they express and illustrate. To put it otherwise, there is a knowledge of things as elements in a whole where these elements condition each other and the whole of which they are parts. The elements, therefore, imply one another, and one may pass by inference from one to the other. The most perfect type of this knowledge is mathematical deduction.

Now it is a fair question how far scientific knowledge ever attains this completeness, but I do not propose to discuss the matter at this point. Yet here at least we have a conception of a

knowledge of objects in experience based on the discernment of their inner connections and relations, so that, given one element, we pass with certainty to another. The progress of scientific knowledge is just a widening, as well as a deepening, of this apprehension : fresh experience impels thought to new hypotheses to explain it, and these hypotheses are verified or corrected in the light of further experience. By this process facts and events which seemed isolated or merely given are placed within an ordered whole.

It is easy to see that knowledge of this kind, won in this way, offers a sharp contrast to the form of religious knowledge which is termed faith. Yet it is true that there are points of contact between them. Both grow out of experience, and are developed at first in a practical interest. Moreover, scientific knowledge, equally with faith, can be said to reach beyond the facts of immediate experience. On the other hand, in knowledge the theoretical interest, the desire to understand as an end in itself, attains a growing importance, while in faith practical motives continue to be supreme. Further, just because of the theoretical element in scientific knowledge, it maintains a different attitude to outer experience from faith. The concern of science is to extend its explanations. So the man of science frames hypotheses and elaborates theories in the interests of wider knowledge ; but these only become a real part of knowledge if they explain what is given and can be verified by experienced facts. The act of faith, however,

does not advance a hypothesis, nor does it depend for verification on an appeal to outward facts. For faith is inner and personal; it does not deduce its object in order to understand it, but postulates it in response to the inner needs of the personal life. In other words, the soul does not posit God as the explanation of the world, but as the object which satisfies its own deepest wants.

Another consideration will serve to bring out more clearly the distinction between faith and scientific knowledge. I refer to the transcendent reference of faith. I will deal with the issue involved later; here it will suffice to show how this reference differentiates the character of developed faith from scientific knowing. The feature of knowledge as explanatory is the establishment of determinate connections between facts of experience: it is the discernment of implications between elements so that they can be organised in a connected and intelligible whole. Here the principle of continuity holds strictly; there must be no break in the series of implications which thought follows out in the form of inference. Reason, always remaining true to this principle, seeks to organise the data of experience into a systematic whole, but it cannot pass beyond what is given to a transcendent ground without losing its specific character as reason. Faith, on the other hand, is not governed by the principle of continuity, and so refuses to be tested by the methods of scientific knowledge. It can afford to do so, because its nature is not primarily

intellectual and theoretical explanation is not its concern. Faith seeks through its transcendent Object the satisfaction of the inner nature, and this includes the affective and connative life of the soul. No doubt the religious man, confronted by the claims of knowledge, and met by the assertion that the represented object of his faith is only a subjective creation, maintains that his apprehension of spiritual Reality has also theoretical validity. But it is quite clear that his faith did not apprehend the Object by the method of theoretical knowing, and his sense of certainty is rooted in religious experience, not in logical deduction.

IV.—The Claims of Reason and the Postulates of Faith

It is patent, then, that there is a contrast in the way in which the object is apprehended by faith and by knowledge. There has sometimes been a tendency to exaggerate this difference and to set the one in radical opposition to the other. But there are objections to this. For one thing, we have to remember that faith and knowledge fall within a unity: they are activities and expressions of the one human nature, and the nature of man cannot be divided against itself. Faith and knowing, then, come together as activities of the spirit of man; they are related modes, in which man seeks the satisfaction of his nature and the development of his personal life. Both claim to deal with what is real, and faith itself is a kind

of knowing. The point, however, we have to put is this: Are both equally valid? Is the claim of both to truth equally sound? Many are inclined to think that knowledge is in a privileged position in this respect, while faith is at a disadvantage. Faith, they say, is an adventure of the spirit, while knowledge means an assured possession: in faith we apprehend the object as we desire it to be, in knowledge we apprehend it as it is. I shall begin by considering how far the claims of rational knowledge can be made good.

Hitherto I have spoken of knowledge and reason without attempting to draw any hard and fast distinction between them. Nor do I think that any rigid separation should be made, for knowledge is implicitly rational, and reason is knowledge developed and grounded. In other words, we follow Kant and say that the idea of reason is totality or system, by means of which the connection of the elements expressed in knowledge is now grounded in the whole. On this view reason is the completed form of knowledge, and the relation of the latter to the former is that of the potential to the actual. We have already seen in a general way how the rationalising process works. It advances on the commonsense point of view, which is abstract, and it does so by establishing connection between experienced data and, in this sense, explaining them. Science follows this method throughout the different departments of experience with which it deals, seeking, for example, to give a connected view of

dynamical, optical, or electrical phenomena. But no given group of natural phenomena is so fully known as to reach the stage at which we can say it is rationalised. Fresh facts are always calling for further explanation, and as men see deeper the provisional character of older theories becomes apparent. Chemistry made a great advance with the atomic theory of Dalton, but the need of explaining new phenomena has led to an analysis which has transformed the atomic into the electrical theory of matter. But here our physicists have been confronted with a further difficulty. According to the classical theory of electrodynamics, the structure of the atom cannot be stable, for its elements, the electrons, are continuously dissipating energy; but the atom, in fact, persists, and to explain this fact we have the quantum theory of energy, which flatly contradicts the older view. To-day we are in the interesting position of finding both theories give good working results when applied to suitable groups of phenomena. Still, it is obvious that this is no permanent solution, and the earlier and later theories alike must rank as provisional till the discovery of some more comprehensive synthesis reveals the transformation which each must undergo. Again, the results of certain recent experiments led to the restricted theory of Relativity, and the latter in turn to the generalised theory, a theory which has been the subject of so much discussion. The generalised theory modifies the Newtonian mechanics, previously

accepted universally, by identifying inertia and gravitation, and by introducing the new idea of the metric properties of the space-time continuum in gravitational fields of force due to the presence of matter.[1] In fact, the process of scientific investigation is breaking down the divisions between the sciences, and is introducing modes of treatment and points of view more and more comprehensive. So we may say that science in our time shows signs of passing from the departmental view of reality, and is tending in the direction of a wider synthesis. The completion of this movement would lead to philosophy, the aim of which at least is a completed system.

But the achievements of science should not blind us to its limitations. Let us look more closely at the character of its results. So far as science has been able to make explicit the connection of elements within definite wholes or groups, we are entitled to say that it has increased our knowledge of them. Yet the process of explanation within the group always leads beyond it, and, as we know, the work of explaining at some point breaks short, leaving us with unrationalised facts on our hands. Moreover, if we neglect for the moment what lies beyond the group, we have to ask how far the explanation given of facts within it is adequate. In reply it has to be said that to interpret a group

[1] The term Relativity in this connection, if its origin is intelligible, is not a satisfactory designation of the theory as a whole. For the results of the theory are absolute in the sense that it offers a mode of representation valid for all observers, and it cannot dispense with invariants.

of phenomena through causal connections between its parts certainly yields no complete knowledge of it. The knowledge may well be valid so far as it goes, though we cannot guarantee its validity with Kant by saying that this follows from the fact that our connected sense-experience is due to the structure of the cognising mind. We all know there are formidable difficulties in supposing that the self-conscious subject can weave our orderly experience in space and time out of a formless " thing in itself." But, setting this aside, we find Kant himself admitting that the mind only brings the general principles of synthesis to experience, and does not give the specific connections of things : the latter can only be known from experience. And in the end our knowledge of a group of phenomena rests on the process of analysis and synthesis by which we have established the existence of determinate connections within it. Nor does it help our insight into any body of facts to say that the specific connections between them depend on universal and *a priori* categories.

Speaking broadly, we may say that the first step in knowing is to recognise continuity or determinate connection between phenomena, and this continuity is itself referred to an underlying unity or identity. What seems different is really in a sense the same. Heat and motion seem diverse, but heat is resolved into a mode of motion ; electricity and light do not seem the same, yet they are unified by the electromagnetic theory of

light. Still, it is easy to see that the success of this method is only partial, for it simplifies by leaving a great deal out of account. We have to face the fact that features in natural processes are not explained, and there are elements which resist our rationalising method. Science follows the quantitative method, but in so doing it does not account for the qualitative differences of things.[1] To reduce the colours of the spectrum, for instance, to quantitative differences in the wave-lengths of the ether leaves us in the dark why violet should correspond to a certain wave-length, and red to another. Sometimes these qualitative differences are simply assumed. Thus in a science like chemistry the investigator commonly assumes these qualitative differences in his data at the outset; he does not explain them, but takes them as given.

A like inexplicable element is present in the working of some of the simplest facts of experience. Take, for instance, the notion of cause and effect, which figures so largely in scientific explanation. We find there a baffling element. We identify something in the cause with something in the effect, and suppose there is a passage from one to the other. But the idea of passage is highly obscure if one tries to think it out; and if we say that cause and effect are one and the same thing

[1] The irreducible differences with which science is confronted have been ably and suggestively treated by Meyerson in his book on *Identité et Realité*. He gives a more detailed historical survey of the whole problem in his *L'Explication dans les Sciences*. I have profited by his discussions.

twice put, the undeniable difference becomes unintelligible. It is the same with the general notion of becoming. It resists explanation in terms of conceptual thinking. To say, as Hegel did, that the categories of being and nothing come together in the higher concept of becoming is only a specious generalisation, which casts no light whatever on any natural process.

It is worthy of note that recent attempts to develop the mathematical view of the world prove singularly inadequate to explain the fulness of experience. Strange to say, the latest scientific thought seems to be returning to a point of view not unlike that of Plato in the '*Timaeus*,' where the idea of matter appears to coincide with that of space. As Meyerson says, apropos of the outcome of such attempts, "The primordial element which we seem to be pursuing escapes us and resolves itself into space." [1] Theories like that of Professor Whitehead can only be fully understood by competent mathematicians.[2] But those who have no claim to speak from this standpoint nevertheless find it hard to resist the conclusion that this kind of analysis comes far short of a real explanation. If the notion of substance is discarded as Professor Whitehead discards it, if in the ultimate analysis Nature reduces to event-particles in a space-time continuum, if what are called objects are simply characters of events, one is at a loss

[1] *Identité et Realité*, p. 489.

[2] *Vide* his *Principles of Natural Knowledge* and his *Concept of Nature*.

to understand how specifically qualified things come to have a definite place in the experienced world. Here and elsewhere scientific thought, after the manner of Spinoza, appears to make a regress on a colourless ground which fails to explain the manifold differences of Nature.

In view of the whole trend of recent scientific thought, it is not unnatural that in some quarters there should be scepticism about the validity of the body of knowledge which claims to be scientific. Is a scientific principle, it is asked, in any sense an explanation of phenomena? Does it yield a real knowledge? Or is it merely a summary description of the modes in which things act? Some scientists themselves take the latter view, and so have expounded what is called the "economic" theory of scientific laws. On this theory laws are not explanations which embody a real knowledge; they are only convenient formulæ, a kind of conceptual shorthand which enables us to manipulate phenomena for practical purposes. Even more decided is the view of Vaihinger, who resolves scientific concepts into fictions which are not in themselves true, but have a certain working value.[1] The difficulty in this case is to see why fictions, which cannot claim truth, still work in practice. Only, one would say, if what is called fiction is more than fiction and expresses in some degree the nature of the real. There must therefore, be limits to our scepticism. The progress of science and its success in manipulating natural

[1] In his *Als Ob*.

forces in human interests would have been impossible if scientific knowledge, though partial and fragmentary, were not real so far as it goes. The fact that it does not go far, and is constantly confronted with unrationalised elements, is consistent with this.

Our conclusion is that the syntheses effected by the scientific reason are at best partial; and this is more conspicuously true of the comprehensive synthesis attempted by philosophy. Yet, in the degree that science gives us a coherent view of a group of phenomena, to that extent it enables us to know them. But neither in science nor philosophy do we gain that systematic insight into the facts of experience which can be called a complete knowledge. If mathematical reasoning may appear to offer an exception, we have to bear in mind that at the outset it simplifies its problems by an act of abstraction; its deductions follow from data which are hypothetical, and the conclusions share the character of the premises. In the case of the phenomena of Nature or of history, all we can claim is, that so far as we can show the presence of connection and coherency in the data with which we are dealing, so far we have a knowledge of them. And if our knowledge in a determinate sphere has implications that call for a wider synthesis, this does not condemn our knowing as false or illusory because partial. That we can know nothing truly because we do not know the whole is an inadmissible proposition.

We have to point out, however, that faith is

present in the practical development of knowledge. Just because the ideal of reason is system, while actual knowledge is partial, every gain in knowledge points beyond itself; and the mind which goes forth on the quest of increasing knowledge does so in faith. Every fresh advance in science is won through belief or trust in a theory or hypothesis which goes beyond the immediate data of experience. The labour of verification is sustained by this trust. Moreover, in every theoretical development which is designed to explain the facts of nature there is faith in the working of the mind, faith in a concord between consistent thinking and the reality which is the object of thought. In the absence of this faith there would be no motive for the mental activity which has for its end discovery. No scientist would trouble to investigate nature if he believed his mental processes were entirely cut off from reality.

Once more, we note that the so-called inductive process can only give probable results for the future. The empirical generalisations we call laws may have a high degree of probability, as in the proposition that "all men will die." But probability always falls short of demonstration, and if we believe, and act on the belief, that these empirical uniformities will work in the future as they have done in the past, then our action is ultimately grounded on faith, not on proof. In the field of history our knowledge is too limited to form a basis for prediction: in the realm of natural forces we know enough to forecast their

future action with some assurance, and, just because of this, to study them is of practical value. Still, in the last resort even this prediction is an anticipation which implies faith, and the element of logical necessity is lacking.

In the case of the knowledge or insight which it is claimed that speculative thinking yields, the presence of faith is still more evident. For the ultimate synthesis by which reason seeks to conceive mind and nature as elements in a unity or organic whole is at the best a hypothesis, which is never verified in such detail as to give it logical cogency. Philosophy has to begin with presuppositions, but its ideal is to return on its presuppositions and take them up into its fully articulated system; and, needless to say, this it never accomplishes. Hence a speculative synthesis ultimately involves an act of faith. Here let me quote Mr. Bradley: "Philosophy demands, and in the end rests on, what may be fairly termed faith." [1] The principle of non-contradiction, central in Bradley's philosophy, and by means of which he makes a regress on an Absolute in which all contradictions are said somehow to be harmonised, rests, it seems to me, on a postulate of faith, for it implies a judgment of value taken as ultimate. In a similar way, Hegel's apotheosis of thought is a judgment of value, the expression of a faith. And this faith cannot be transformed into reason by showing that the Absolute reached by thought can include and harmonise all the

[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 15.

elements of experience within its systematic unity.

The result we have reached may now be briefly summarised. In the first place, there is no organised body of knowledge at our disposal by which faith as such can be either superseded or discredited. As Ward puts it: "Faith contradicts nothing that science is in a position to affirm." [1] Nor is science or philosophy free to object to faith as an attitude of mind to the object, for, as we have seen, faith enters into the attitude of the man of science as well as into that of the philosopher. Again, the systems of knowledge which we can use are partial, and they contain within themselves unresolved elements. They are not adequate to the reality with which they deal, and so cannot function as final tests of the validity of the postulates of faith.

The contrast between faith and reason is the contrast of their respective modes of procedure and ways of apprehending. But the distinction between them cannot be stated as Kant stated it, nor can faith be severely restricted to a region which lies beyond the domain of knowledge. The view we are criticising has sometimes been expressed in the proposition, "where reason ends faith begins," or, in other words, reason has a well-defined province of its own, and beyond it lies the sphere of faith. But, as we have insisted, knowledge is always partial, and faith is present behind the activity of reason. In fact, faith is the

[1] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 417.

more elementary activity, and its field is wider than that of reason. It would be true to say that where reason ends faith does not end, for the final synthesis which reason seeks, but never gains, is reached by the act of religious faith. That is to say, through faith man wins a world-view in which human life, and the larger whole of experience within which it develops, receive a satisfying meaning and value. In this sense we may say that faith is the completion of knowledge.

One further consideration deserves to be emphasised, for it shows that religious faith, if it is to conserve its essential character, must go beyond the sphere of reason. We have already laid stress on the transcendent reference of a spiritual and developed faith. But when we posit the transcendent we imply that there is a break between it and the given world of common experience: in other words, the transcendent world is not continuous with the world of sense-perception. The process of reason, on the other hand, is governed by the principle of continuity, and it treats a break in continuity as apparent merely and a problem to be resolved. Reason will execute no *salto mortale ;* if it goes beyond the outward appearance of objects, it does so by seeing more deeply into them and explicating the unity which underlies them. It makes progress by bringing refractory elements within a totality or organised whole, and by so doing it establishes continuity within that whole. Now if reason could apply this ideal of system to the universe and work it out successfully,

it is obvious that the ultimate Ground of the universe could not be God as transcendent. The kind of God that would be reached by this method could only be the unity of the whole, the absolute system itself. It is matter of common knowledge that speculative thinkers have often reached this conclusion, and have declared that the word God can have no other meaning. Yet it is clear enough that the impersonal principle of unity in the universe is not what the normal religious consciousness means by God. In developed religion faith is a personal attitude, and its reference is to an object that can be described as personal; and this the system of things cannot be. Were God the Absolute in this sense the whole evolution of the religious spirit would rest on an illusion, and the persistence of the illusion would be inexplicable.

If we recognise that reason is always an unfinished process; if knowledge is always confronted by a non-rational; if the conception developed by thought of a final synthesis remains an unrealised ideal; then the place of faith in life is amply justified. For postulates are necessary by which to organise the ethical and spiritual values and so to secure the fulfilment of the personal life. The scope and meaning of these postulates have been gradually defined in the historic development of religion. And the evolution of faith, I take it, is just the growth of a spirit and tendency present in man from the first. But the spirit has only slowly realised what its own needs imply; it has only

slowly discerned the true nature of the object through which it can find its fulfilment. The religious faith which finds its final goal in a transcendent Reality is just the mature expression of that consciousness of the Divine which has haunted mankind from the first. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

V.—The Relations of Faith and Reason in the Religious Life

Faith and Reason, as we have seen, represent two different attitudes to the world, two distinctive ways of reacting on experience. In the one the intellectual interest prevails, in the other the demands of the affective and connative life are dominant. Faith and reason, however, cannot be alien to one another, for both of them are the outcome of deep-rooted needs and both are expressions of the active self. There is no inherent necessity that the one should advance claims which the other is driven to repudiate. As a matter of fact, antagonism has only emerged after the stage of mental development is reached when criticism and doubt begin to play a definite part in the life of mind. When reflective thinking is exercised on the content of religion, the need is felt of establishing consistency between the claims of faith and the body of existing knowledge. But why, it may be asked, should there be any incoherency, if it be true that what faith asserts science is not in a position to

dispute ? If each keeps its own province, why should the peace be disturbed ? The truth is that there has been conflict, and to understand why it has arisen some explanation is desirable.

Faith as it works in spiritual religion has for its ultimate object a transcendent Being and a transcendent Good. But neither God nor the supreme Good, which faith identifies with God, can in the nature of the case fall within the system of rational knowledge. And this because Faith represents them as transcendent. So from its own point of view knowledge cannot disprove these postulates of faith. But religious faith is urged by its own needs to do more than posit the transcendent Reality. The Christian consciousness, for example, could not rest satisfied with a God who is merely transcendent, and the spiritual mind is not content with any form of Deism. For theistic faith the world of experience is not a completely self-inclosed sphere governed solely by mechanical principles ; nor can any spiritual religion dispense with the belief that there is an operation of the Divine on human souls. In short, God is conceived not only as transcendent, but as immanent ; He works within the world and finite spirits. Thus while the primary and ultimate object of faith lies in the Beyond, by an impulse which springs from the very situation in which he finds himself, the man of faith claims the world as the sphere of divine operations, and asserts his right to set a religious interpretation on it. Regarded from this standpoint faith and knowledge have so far a

common object, the one giving a religious and the other a scientific reading of the facts of experience. Here at least there are possibilities of discord, and, as we are all aware, conflicts have ensued.

The situation has been made more difficult by the fact that theological thought has developed the postulates of faith and has translated them into doctrinal forms. In this way it has advanced propositions about the world which it claims are authoritative because based on revelation, and which consequently must have theoretical validity. The assertion that these propositions ought to be accepted in faith was challenged by science. And, if we are right, theological statements are not the direct object of faith ; they can only claim faith in a derivative sense, in the sense, namely, that they can be shown to be implied in the primary object of faith. Nor can the appeal to the authority of revelation help in this instance. For theology is the outcome of man's reflective thinking, and cannot be directly identified with revealed truth. So far then as the theologian has defined in doctrines the relation of God to the world and His modes of action within it, these can only in a secondary way become objects of faith. In other words, we may be invited to have faith in them because they express truths which are implied in the God of faith and religious experience, or, to put it broadly, because they denote values that are bound up with the religious consciousness. How far they do or do not do so may, in a given case, be a problem. On the other hand, as theoretical validity is

claimed for such doctrines, their right to acceptance by faith must depend on certain conditions. The chief of these is that the dogmas in question harmonise, or at least do not conflict with, our theoretical knowledge of the world and the relations of its parts. For if you claim truth or validity for a proposition, you cannot refuse to submit it to the test of coherent thinking; and when the proposition has reference to facts and processes within the natural order of things, it ought not to contradict any assured knowledge we possess in this domain. In this case theology is not entitled to assert what science is in a position to deny.

To some it has seemed that the principle by which theoretical validity is predicated of the ultimate Object of faith, and for doctrines which seem to flow from it, leads religion into serious difficulties. Why, it may be said, should the religious mind not restrict itself to asserting the privileges and the value of faith? But this way of lifting religion above the region of dispute does so by ignoring important considerations. If faith were satisfied, and could remain content, merely to postulate values, leaving the question open whether these values stood for more than subjective satisfactions of the feelings and the will, then, no doubt, the issues before us would not be raised. For there would be nothing postulated which could conflict with knowledge. But this is a position which the religious consciousness never has taken up and never can take up. Though faith does not reach its object by the process of theoretical knowing, it

none the less asserts the reality of its object. For its own justification it is bound to do so ; and if the religious mind believed its object was perhaps illusory, its faith would wither and die. Man cannot worship what he feels may turn out to be a mental fiction. But this affirmation of reality involves a claim to theoretical truth ; and though the religious man is well aware that he did not reach the object by a process of theoretical knowing, he none the less holds that this object is as real and valid as a verified truth in the sphere of knowledge. And this position he cannot abandon. The possibility of conflict cannot, therefore, be obviated by any concession of this kind.

As we have seen, where the object of faith is ultimate and transcendent, science is not in a position to contest its validity. The case is otherwise when the transcendent Object is also declared to be immanent in the world of experience, and propositions about its way of acting there are declared to be true. Here full weight has to be given to the unity and coherency of truth. Here what claims to be religious knowledge must not contradict knowledge, for we cannot take refuge, as the later Schoolmen did, in the subterfuge of a " double truth."

That there should have been misunderstanding and dispute between theology and science was inevitable, because the origins of theology go back to a pre-scientific age. It was only to be expected that points of difference should emerge between modern knowledge and religion doctrines about the

world developed in ignorance of it. The mistakes, however, have not been all on one side: religion has repudiated conclusions which science was entitled to maintain, and science has sought to refute what the knowledge at its disposal did not suffice to disprove. It may be of use to give one or two illustrations of this.

It was for long asserted by Christian theologians that the sudden creation of the world out of nothing a few thousand years ago was a valid truth based on revelation. Now, so far as creation is concerned, reason is not in a position to show that it is impossible or incredible. It is a fact, if it be a fact, which scientific knowledge neither endorses nor contradicts. But when you pass from the idea of creation to the date and method of the creative act, there is a good deal of knowledge which bears on the question. This knowledge is certainly inconsistent with the affirmation of a recent creation of the world in time, and with the details given in Genesis. The body of geological evidence, to speak of nothing further, is against it. And the same may be said of the creation of man. That man was brought into being by an external and unique act of God at a comparatively late date is disproved by the mass of anthropological evidence, and that he has slowly developed from sub-human forms is more then probable. The proofs which have accumulated within the last two generations place the subject beyond the region of controversy. On the other hand, though naturalism has not disproved the claim that the emergence of man in the world is

due to an activity of God within the mundane order, it is still clear that, if we hold this view, we must hold it subject to the proviso that there has been a continuity of development from lower forms of life up to its highest form in the self-conscious spirit of man. Here is an illustration of how a body of knowledge based on experience rightly modifies beliefs about the world and man which theologians had mistakenly regarded as valid truths. In this matter it is futile to deny the competency of science to pronounce judgment, for religion is here putting its own construction on matters which fall within the domain of science. And when, as in this case, the scientific view rests on a coherent body of knowledge, it must prevail.

The vexed question of miracle stands in a somewhat different position. The Christian may fairly contend that a belief in the supernatural action of God within the world and human souls flows from his primary faith in the Divine goodness and love. It is an implicate, it may be said, of the fundamental postulate. At the same time, when the religious man declares that certain events within the natural order are supernaturally mediated, he is putting forward an interpretation which reason may challenge. It may do so in a given case by contending that the evidence for the alleged miracle is not sufficient and reliable ; or it may argue that the fact taken to reveal the supernatural is quite capable of a natural explanation.

On the other hand, it has been maintained that the scientific conception of the world of experience

excludes the possibility of miracle, for every event which falls within the natural order is a factor in a system of causes and effects and is entirely explained by it. Some theologians of the Ritschlian type have even admitted that science is within its rights in rejecting the supernatural on this score, while religion, on its own grounds, is justified in accepting it. But the mind cannot rest in a dualism of this kind. Faith is not justified in affirming anything which scientific knowledge can disprove.

In this case it seems to me that scientific knowledge does not entitle us to deny the possibility of supernatural action within the natural order. For reason does not suffice to show that the natural order forms a rigidly closed system in which every event can only be explained in terms of natural causality. The operation of human wills within that order reveals the presence of modes of action not to be accounted for on this method. Moreover, within the natural system of things breaks in continuity confront the cognising mind and facts remain unrationalised. To affirm, therefore, that nature forms a closed system of mechanical causality is merely an hypothesis, and it is an hypothesis which has no sufficient justification. So far as scientific knowledge goes it does not disprove the possibility of a divine or supernatural acting within nature, this divine activity so supplementing the ordinary action of causes that there occur events in the natural order which nature of itself could not produce from its own inherent

resources. The conclusion we draw is, that religious faith in the reality of the supernatural is not barred *ab initio* by scientific knowledge. At the same time it is legitimate to consider whether any alleged miracle is not patient of a natural explanation, or whether it stands the test of historical criticism.

The general conclusion to be drawn from these cases of conflict between reason and faith appears to be this. When religion invites faith in matters which fall within the sphere in which scientific knowledge is operative, it is of the first importance that these derivative acts of faith should stand in organic relation to those ultimate postulates of faith on which the life of religion depends. If we apply this test fairly we shall have to admit that there are many theological propositions which men may judge to be true, or hold to be erroneous, without prejudice ; for they are propositions which do not belong to the essence of faith and they cannot be made a test of spiritual religion. On the other hand, we may properly demand that where, on presumed grounds of scientific knowledge, men strive to discredit old religious beliefs, they should first of all be assured of the nature and extent of this knowledge. Thus to determine on the basis of a very partial knowledge of the natural order what events may or may not happen within it is quite illegitimate.

The general results we have reached as to the parts reason and faith have to play in religion may now be set down. Plainly, it cannot be in the

interests of the spiritual life that there should be discord between the two. Yet it is clear that an understanding will not be reached if faith is reduced to terms of reason, or if reason is suppressed in the interests of faith. For each has its claims, and in a developed religion both have their functions. We shall not care to dispute this if we remember, as we have already urged, that reason and faith have their roots in the nature of man and are appropriate ways in which he reacts on this many-sided world. In view of the part he has to play man can dispense with neither. For knowledge and faith are both developed in the interests of life, and the individual is stimulated to exercise them by the pressure of the changing situations with which he has to deal. Faith and knowledge, then, are not alien to each other, and their unity from a teleological point of view is also emphasised by their common dependence on the historic life and its progress. The one as well as the other advances under the leading of the historic experience which gives them content. Neither the "will to believe" nor the "will to know" can work, so to speak, *in vacuo*. The body of knowledge which exists as a social inheritance is at once ground and guide to reason in its further progress. In a like way faith depends on the beliefs and values current in the historic religious life, a life which bears within it the fruits of man's age-long endeavour to apprehend spiritual truth. If faith makes postulates, it does not do so arbitrarily. And if the act of faith is a personal act, it none the less draws

meaning and content from the historic religious life by which it is supported and nourished. But the value of the content of faith thus historically mediated, the individual must experience for himself and by experience verify.

Once more, reason and faith, as we have seen, are both directed to the apprehension of what is true and real, for only by laying hold of truth and reality can man satisfy the demands of his inner nature. Science cannot rest in a hypothesis, and the religious spirit will not accept a hypothetical reality as the object of its faith. So much faith and knowledge have in common, but they differ in the way they reach their goal. To perceive this difference and to recognise its justification is essential to harmony.

On the part of religion there should be sympathy and appreciation of the work of reason, frank recognition of the part it has played in the subvention of human need. Nor can religion, any more than science or philosophy, venture to make claims which are irrational: to do so is to prejudice its cause. No one has any right to invite faith in a doctrine which can be shown to be inconsistent with the results of rational inquiry. And religion is ill-served by those who, on grounds of authority, demand faith in anything which contradicts knowledge. To do this is to do damage to the inner nature of faith itself; and faith which despises knowledge ends in superstition. Faith and reason must co-operate in giving meaning to the world and life, and we can dispense with neither of them.

But while religion should have sympathy with knowledge and its tasks, while it should treat science as an ally and not as an enemy, it cannot abate its insistence on the claims of faith. For faith will always be essential, if the transcendent element in religion is to come to its own, and on this ground the use of reason in religion can never supersede that of faith. As a fact of experience it seems to be true, that an exclusive dependence on reason tends to end in disillusionment and a lapse into nescience. If the bold syntheses of speculative thought are acclaimed for a season they are soon disintegrated by criticism, and in the end they figure mainly as historic landmarks in the history of philosophy. As we grow older most of us, I suppose, feel more keenly the mystery which remains despite all the enterprise and toil of human thinking. And if our sole ground of hope were in the powers of reason, we might well conclude that of ultimate origins and destinies we can know nothing: *ignoramus et ignorabimus.*

> "Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
> Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
> And where the land she travels from? Away,
> Far, far behind, is all that they can say."

This is a deeply disconcerting conclusion; and if man were to acquiesce in it a blight would fall on earthly aspiration and endeavour. To toil strenuously for an unknown end, to put forth all the powers when there is no assurance of the issue, this is impossible.

One would not wish to speak disparagingly of

the efforts of the speculative reason, and many, notably those in the spring-time of life, have expected great things of it. It was a fine thought of Plato that the philosopher was συνοπτικός, a man who "thought things together" and then by a flash of insight attained a vision of the whole. This, indeed, is the ideal, but it remains an unrealised ideal. To one condemned to stand at a point within the world-process no such divine vision is vouchsafed. Reason leaves its task unfinished, and man has to win through faith the world-view, the synthesis, which his spiritual needs demand. Through faith, and only through faith, does man gain the assurance which forms the stable basis of his religious life, the assurance that there is a living God over all, and that things "work together for good." To pass from the sphere of reason into the realm of faith is an act by which the religious spirit justifies itself.

The realm of faith is not the realm of logical thinking, where premises and conclusions are firmly knit together. Here the element of logical compulsion is and must be lacking. For faith is a movement of the whole personality; it is an act of personal preference and freedom. Hence faith cannot be coerced, and no spiritual conviction can be created by a parade of arguments and religious evidences. Any appeal for faith remains futile unless it evoke a free response from the soul; the spirit must seek if it is to find, it must ask if it is to receive. Were faith less than this it would not be the act of a responsible ethical spirit.

The conception of faith as an act of freedom suggests to us its moral and spiritual significance in human life. Though faith is free it is not capricious, for it springs from and expresses the universal need of the soul. It is man's personal consciousness of his spiritual needs, and his personal response to them, which he embodies in his faith in that transcendent Good which is the ground of the world and his own being. If we can speak of necessity in this reference, it can only mean the moral obligation we are under to acknowledge the reality of the Supreme Good which for the religious mind is one with God. As such it is an ultimate personal attitude ; it is the affirmation of what life means for us and what we mean for ourselves.

If we hold with Butler that man's life is a probation, then its probationary character is seen in the opportunity it offers to a soul of exercising faith and of apprehending God. But many things conspire to cast a veil of blindness over human eyes. All men pursue what they take to be good, but many identify the good with the things which perish with the using only to find themselves disillusioned in the end. If we are not to lay waste our spiritual powers, we must seek and we must find a Good which this world can neither give nor take away. And without a faith which reaches out to the Unseen and the Eternal we cannot seek so as to find. Life without faith is a baffling and unsatisfying experience.

II

THE GENESIS AND TRUTH OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

WITHIN the last two generations there has been an intensive study of primitive culture as well as the genesis and development of religious beliefs. A large and ever-growing mass of information bearing on the various stages of religious evolution has been gathered from many fields and is now at the disposal of the student. What is called Comparative Religion is greatly in evidence, and much has been written on the affinities of religious ideas and cult-practices in different parts of the world. A general knowledge of the origins and growth of religious ideas is no longer the privilege of the specialist; it is more or less diffused among educated people. The results thus achieved have impressed the dispassionate observer with the conviction that religion is no artificial product: its roots go deep down into human nature itself.

On the other hand, the strange variety of these beliefs, their divergencies and inconsistencies, their growth and their decay, perplex us and provoke doubts about their real significance and value. As he surveys the wide religious prospect the student feels himself like the spectator who is gazing at a tangled forest of trees intermingled with a rank undergrowth, where the eye cannot detect the out-

lines of plan or order. If he turn for guidance to workers in this domain, to men like Tylor and Tiele, Frazer and Wundt, he will of course find the field has been roughly mapped out and phenomena arranged and classified. But if he ask for more than this, if he seek for some light on the meaning of this impressive spectacle, he will discover that the authorities on the subject are reserved and reticent. Their aim for the most part is purely scientific and descriptive ; and if one may sometimes gather from them that religion is deeply infected with illusions, they are content to say little about the positive elements of truth which it may contain. Moreover, they may fairly contend that they only profess to expound the facts in a scientific manner, and are not called on to raise deliberately the question of truth or validity : that really belongs to a Philosophy of Religion. At the same time, constituted as we are, we find it hard to limit ourselves to the scientific attitude in studying religion. There is always the tendency to form some judgment-of-value on the phenomena, and this even when an explicit statement is avoided. In fact, the purely descriptive science of religion is unsatisfying. The character and claims of the beliefs we investigate invite us to face the deeper issues. For at every stage the religious consciousness claims truth for its ideas, and so raises for us the problem of validity. The problem is perplexing. As we consider these claims in retrospect we see that many of them are inconsistent with others, and this warns us that we cannot take all of them

at their face-value. In the circumstances some are tempted to form the extreme conclusion that all religious beliefs are alike unfounded, and the realities which the religious mind claims to know are beyond knowledge. When there is so much conflict of ideas about the Divine, it is the part of wisdom to be agnostic.

We have seen that it is difficult to maintain a purely scientific attitude to religious phenomena, and scientific treatment may almost unconsciously pass into philosophical interpretation. But there is the danger that if the scientist offers this kind of interpretation, he will do so on a narrow and insufficient basis. If the scientific observer, for instance, has a strong bias towards naturalism, he may conclude that the final explanation of religion is that which traces it to the working of primary instincts—say, the self-conserving instinct—which in the course of evolution are qualified by imaginative hopes and fears. On this view religious ideas are reduced to illusory products of primordial impulses, ideas which assume their shape through the interaction of the human mind with its natural environment. It would be easy to show that this so-called explanation ignores much in the working of the religious consciousness and in the character of the religious experience. And yet on unstable foundations like this it is not uncommon to find judgments-of-value passed on religious beliefs, judgments which follow the lead of Lucretius in identifying religion with superstition. If we are to do justice to the religious experience and the

beliefs which grow out of it, we must avoid the sin of hasty and one-sided generalisation. It will only lead us astray, to take another illustration, if we follow those psycho-analysts who find in "infantile thinking" the echo of pre-historic man, and suggest that in mythology, under which presumably religious ideas fall, we have only "distorted memories of the wish-phantasms of whole nations." [1] To the unreflecting, or to those who for some reason are prejudiced, these theories may appear impressive, but they have no claim to explain the facts. For religious beliefs are the outcome of man's conscious life; religion is the issue of conscious feelings and needs, not the survival of obscure and elemental tendencies.

The problem which meets the serious student of the genesis of religious beliefs is not so much that of their grouping and classification, though this is of value as a piece of preparatory work. The question which presses on him is rather how to find some underlying principle behind the various forms of religious ideas, some line of continuity between them which will give him some clue to the significance of the religious process as a whole. In dealing with this matter he cannot fall back on the distinctions which once were common; for instance, the distinction between conventional religion and the religion of nature, or the traditional separation between natural and revealed religion. For they are not relevant to the problem at issue, and they shed no light on

[1] *Vide* Jung, *The Psychology of the Unconscions*, p. 29.

the actual movement of the religious consciousness from one stage to another. Our only hope of discovering some continuity and order in religious representations, and of appreciating the part these play in the changing life of man, is to envisage, so far as we can, the religious process from its inner side. In other words, to understand and evaluate these beliefs in their significant relations with one another, we must try to establish contact with those creative forces in the human spirit which bring religion to birth and growth. Some personal insight into the interior working of religion is needed, some psychological appreciation of the religious experience, if we are to find meaning and order in its phenomenal manifestations.

I lay stress on this at the outset, for some false or misleading theories about the origin and meaning of religion are really due to the quite external way in which the subject is treated. An extreme illustration of this fault would be the attempt to account for the genesis of religious ideas by the action of the natural environment on man. Historical phenomena can never be explained on these lines. It needs only a moment's reflection to realise that it is not the environment which is important but the reaction of the mind to stimuli from the environment. Yet to recognise that religion is due to the activity of man's mind is not enough, for we might say just the same of science and art. The activity of the spirit to be religious must have some definite quality which

distinguishes it from other aspects of the life of mind. Shall we say, then, that it is an attitude of mind marked by fear and wonder ? It would be true to say so, and yet not sufficient ; for wonder also begets science, and fear is likewise the parent of magic. In other words, fear and wonder do not have *per se* a religious value ; they do not give of themselves the specific religious atmosphere, and they must be qualified by some other element or elements ere they form part of a religious state of mind.

Keeping, then, this result in view, we shall be prepared to reject theories which in one way or another ignore it. We shall not, for example, find that much real light is thrown on the genesis of religious ideas by the method of Levy Bruhl, who seeks to trace them to the pre-logical mentality of primitive peoples.[1] No one doubts that the primitive man's outlook on the world was very different from our own. But, despite M. Bruhl, it is hard to see how he managed to survive, if he did not for practical purposes use the principles of contradiction and of causality much as we do in ordinary life. Moreover, to say that the world in which the primitive mind moves is mystical is to judge it from the point of view of developed self-consciousness rather than to denote what it was for the savage himself. Of course pre-logical mentality is not in itself religion, and Levy Bruhl so far recognises this and supplements his theory by another supposition. He supposes,

[1] *Vide* his *Primitive Mentality*, Eng. Trans.

why I do not know, that what he calls " collective representations " of lower races impress individuals with feelings of respect, fear, and adoration.[1] Yet if this way of thinking were universal in the lower culture, why should it provoke emotions of the kind ? Awe and adoration are indeed bound up with the religious attitude, but to trace them to a general pre-logical mentality seems devoid of psychological probability, even if we assume for the moment that the savage mind was pre-logical.

M. Levy Bruhl's work has the merit of directing attention to the social significance of early ideas, and M. Durkheim has carried this principle out in detail in his theory of the origin and development of the religious consciousness.[2] While agreeing with Levy Bruhl on the dominance of the principle of " collective representation " in early culture, Durkheim definitely connects the idea of the divine with the idea of the group or social whole. Society, he argues, can create in man the sense of the divine, for it penetrates and controls its individual members, and produces in them the feeling of a constant dependence upon it. A god is just a force on which we rely, and " society penetrates and organises itself within us." [3] The religious force resident in society is " the collective and anonymous force of the class," and its expression is the totem. Thus envisaged in the totem

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 6 ff.
[2] *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Eng. Trans.
[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 205–6, 209.

religious force appears to be outside individuals, though it is really present in them as members of the group. Fear did not create gods. It is society itself which is the source of that happy confidence which characterises religion. For Durkheim religion is not grounded on illusion. It has a *vera causa* : the power which is reverenced exists, and it is society.[1] But the primitive mind can only represent the reality it reveres under the form of symbol, and this symbol is the totem. The function of the symbol is to give outward expression to the religious force.

It is plain that at the best Durkheim's theory is a lop-sided account of the origin and meaning of the religious consciousness. As has been remarked, with Durkheim individual religion largely disappears from the picture. The theory itself contains a great deal which is merely conjectural. That the group operates as a mysterious force which engenders in its members a feeling of religious awe, is a proposition for which there is no sufficient evidence. Again, the meaning of the totem, it is said, is to symbolise the religious force. But need this be so ? May the totem not simply represent the unity of the group which traces its descent to the totem-ancestor ? Moreover, if Durkheim's theory is to be a general account of the origin of religious beliefs, as he obviously intends, then he is committed to the view that totemism is as universal as religion. Of this, however, there is no evidence, and in

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 221, 224–25.

the light of such facts as we know it is quite improbable. In truth, the writer never fairly faces this difficulty, and his investigations are largely confined to the Australian aborigines, among whom totemism is admittedly rife. But some early religions reveal no trace of totemic phenomena, though this is not true of spiritism. If Durkheim is right, spiritism must be a development from an earlier totemic stage, but his attempts to show how this took place are by no means convincing. Surely man did not need to evolve the idea of a totem before he could reach the idea of a spirit. The hypothesis is simpler and more natural to suppose that the advance was from spiritism to totemism.

Such plausibility as may attach to Durkheim's sociological explanation of religious beliefs is confined to the elementary forms of the religious life. He admits, of course, that the religious consciousness has developed beliefs in gods and in one God. But for him these concepts are essentially social products, and in virtue of his analysis he concludes that society is the source as well as the object of religion. As applied to spiritual religion the conclusion seems absurd, and Durkheim could only attempt to justify his interpretation by urging that he has read the true meaning of religion in its elementary forms. What one misses in the theory is a large outlook on religion in the light of its development. For plainly there must be a continuity in the evolution of religion; there must be some identity of spirit

and motive which runs through its varying phases and forms, linking the rudimentary beginnings to the mature unfolding. There must be something wrong with a theory of the religious consciousness which may perhaps be a plausible interpretation of certain elementary religions, but which transparently breaks down when applied to the phenomena of developed religion. Unless we can reach some constant and pervasive elements which run through religious experience as a whole, we have not read the meaning of the genesis of religious beliefs.[1]

I do not think that the sociological theory can make good a claim to supersede the work done on primitive culture and religion by writers like Waitz, Tylor and Tiele. The contribution of Tylor is deserving of grateful recognition, though after the lapse of over fifty years some of its defects begin to be apparent. Religion, we see now, is more than "belief in spiritual beings," and animism is not in itself religion.[2] Moreover, Tylor, as has been remarked, puts forward too individualistic a view of the genesis of religious beliefs, and fails to do justice to the social element involved in belief. But he laid the foundations on which others have built. The most complete development of the principles enunciated by Waitz and Tylor is, I suppose, the work done by Wundt in the section of his *Völkerpsychologie* entitled

[1] On Durkheim's theory the movement of religion should have its goal in a Positivist Religion of Humanity. Yet this is an artificial religion which breaks with the historic religious consciousness.

[2] *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., 1891, vol. I., p. 424.

Mythus und Religion. His treatment of the whole subject is remarkable for erudition and wealth of detail, if not conspicuously original. The point which concerns us here is the general view which Wundt takes of the origin and development of religious beliefs. Speaking broadly, we may say that for him religious ideas are intimately linked with the belief in souls and with the development of this belief.[1] He begins with the body-soul or "bound-soul," which he takes to be the earliest form; then the idea of the "free-soul" is evolved, which is represented as the "breath-soul" and later as the "shadow-soul." The latter, again, is further developed under the influence of dreams, visions, and ecstatic conditions. Fetishism and Totemism depend on an already existing Spiritism. Out of the idea of the soul thus fashioned grow the notions of dæmons and gods under the stimulus of mythical thinking and "vivifying apperception." At a later stage, and under the guidance of reflective thinking, there arises the conception of God as transcendent reality and ultimate ground of the universe.

If we except the notion of the bound or "body-soul," for the existence of which there seems little evidence, Wundt's theory of the growth of religious beliefs follows lines which are fairly familiar. The moving element in the process is mythical thinking, which stimulates the emotions and these in turn vivify the religious ideas. Phantasy, however, cannot guarantee the truth of the beliefs

[1] *Vide Mythus und Religion*, I. 2, p. 2 ff.

which it creates: validity will only be secured when the imaginative representation has been transformed into a rational insight. One is reminded here of the Hegelian *Vorstellung* which only attains truth when it has been translated into the philosophical *Begriff*. On Wundt's theory as a whole it may suffice to make two general remarks in the way of criticism. (1) Belief in spirits or souls is not in itself necessarily a religious act. The worship of an object involves a selective act on the part of the subject which invests the object with a specific quality that differentiates it from objects which are not sacred, and this specific character remains imperfectly explained. (2) Further, the emotional element in religion, on Wundt's view, remains too much subordinated to the imaginative, and the function of emotion in stimulating and sustaining imagination is not sufficiently recognised. If mythical thinking is of great importance in giving form to religious beliefs, it none the less continues in a constant dependence on impulses proceeding from the feeling-life.

It was natural that the reaction against intellectualism in philosophy, which has been much in evidence during the last generation, should also reveal itself in the interpretation of the genesis of religious beliefs. This movement has beyond doubt had the result of directing attention to features in the religious experience which were not receiving due recognition. For there is a non-rational element in religion, and the shadow of

mystery has always gathered round it. It was in point therefore to ask if this factor, on which the earlier students of religious origins had said little, was not to be taken seriously in any inquiry into the origin of religious beliefs. The secret of religion, it was believed, lay in feeling rather than in thought, and the new tendency has points of contact with Schleiermacher.[1]

In recent years students of primitive culture have been more and more impressed by the part played in early society by the mysterious, the incomprehensible, and the supernatural, and by the powerful feelings that are associated with them. The notion of *Mana*, to use the Melanesian word, which denotes a supernatural power resident in things, was seen to be spread through early culture. This led Marett to suggest that "we must admit the fact that in response to, or at any rate in connexion with, the emotions of Awe, Wonder, and the like, wherein feeling would seem for the time being to have outstripped the power of 'natural,' that is reasonable, explanation, there arises in human thought a powerful impulse to objectify and even personify the mysterious and 'supernatural' something felt."[2] Windelband, in his very suggestive essay, lays stress on the

[1] As illustrating this point of view we may refer to the following works: R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, 1909; W. Windelband, Essay on *Das Heilige* in his *Praeludien*, 3rd ed., 1907; N. Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglauben*, 1916; Finally, R. Otto's well-known book, *Das Heilige*, 1st ed., 1917, and his additional vol., *Aufsätze das Numinosa Betreffend*, 1923.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

"supernatural" and mysterious element in the religious experience, and finds that in religion there is the sense of being bound up with a mysterious life.[1] This feeling of the transcendent, however, when it strives to embody itself in representation, is confronted with an insoluble problem; for the *Holy* can never be adequately expressed in myth or in dogma. This supramundane content which is the life of religion is the *Sacred*. Otto's book, to which I have already referred in the previous Essay, does not, I think, make any substantial advance in principle on Windelband's treatment.[2] But he traces and illustrates the operation of the Holy with great impressiveness and in much detail, and also envelops it in an elaborate schematism which is less convincing. He insists on the specific character of religious feeling, which is something unique. For him it is the sense of the *numinous*, the feeling of the "uncanny," the consciousness of the "wholly other." It is the non-rational which is a constant factor in religious experience, and gives rise to the sacred as distinguished from the profane. This mystic consciousness of the *numen*, the "something" there, is the spring of the religious consciousness, and apart from it ideas of souls and spirits would not arise. We can see now where this interpretation diverges from that of Wundt. According to Otto, the peculiar

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 425.

[2] *Vide Knowledge and Religious Faith*, p. 29. For Söderblom also the distinction of the sacred and profane belongs to the essence of religion.

religious feeling is the essential thing, and that both for the origin and for the development of religion. To Wundt, on the other hand, the genesis of religious beliefs through phantasy is the central feature, while the associated feelings play a real, though a subordinate part. The emphasis in the one case falls on the intellective element, and in the other on the non-rational element.

There is, I think, much evidence to show that the emotions of awe and reverence, the sense of the mysterious and uncanny, are, so to speak, the atmosphere within which religion breaks into life, and without which man would not be impelled to religious acts. The operation of these feelings is needed to explain the selection of the religious object. The sense of need is also present in urging man to religion ; but the act of preference by which he worships this rather than that is not entirely explained by it. There must be the religious atmosphere and the sense of a presence which suffices to elicit worship. That this peculiar religious element is a profound awe and a sense of the mysterious can hardly be doubted. And it is even possible that this deep-rooted emotion, this sense of a " supernatural " power, may have engendered incipient religious acts prior to the development of explicit religious beliefs.[1] When such beliefs do emerge, then the objects to

[1] Prof. Pratt, in his recent book, *The Religious Consciousness*, inclines to the view that a rudimentary cult may exist prior to explicit religious ideas. Yet the cult-acts must at least convey a meaning.

which they refer, in correspondence to the subjective feeling, are always in some degree mysterious, different from the ordinary things of sense, and lying beyond them. The feeling of the holy penetrates the group, it invests the objects to which it is referred with the quality of the sacred, and by association it imparts to things, acts and places the same character. Thus the sacred acquires a social significance. So far, I think, we can agree with the theory we have been discussing. But though the specific emotion is the condition of the emergence of religious ideas, these ideas have a value of their own, and they contribute something which is essential to religion. When we consider the way in which religion develops, we cannot fail to recognise how important is the ideational element in man; for it interprets emotion, refers it to the appropriate object, and provides the world-view in terms of which religious beliefs work. It would be a misreading of the facts to suppose that religious ideas do not contribute to the character of the religious experience; it would be a mistake to conclude that these ideas are merely subsidiary products or instruments of a mysterious feeling, which, in the form of a non-rational impulse, runs through the religious life and constitutes it. For religion must have a meaning if it is to function as a social value, and this meaning involves an interpretation which is perhaps unconscious yet is not the work of feeling. That the interpretation is stimulated by the presence of feeling is true, but

this lends no support to the view that meaning is conveyed by feeling in itself. This fact is emphasised when we turn to the development of religion. For this very process of development would have been impossible apart from the intellective activity involved in imaginative thinking. The transition from one religious idea to another idea which is more satisfying is only possible when intellective activity is present to distinguish and to relate the two ideas. If this be so, and if religion reveals its nature by the way in which it develops, it follows that the work of the mind in the religious sphere cannot be purely subordinate and instrumental.

There is another consideration which should be kept in mind. The rich emotional life which is so important in developed religion is not the simple outcome of the intrinsic resources of feeling. It is made possible by the activity of the mind, which provides the religious spirit with higher objects of belief around which a new range of emotions and sentiments may gather. Even the narrow and intense feeling of the numinous on which Otto lays such stress suffers change in the process of religious development. The shuddering dread of the savage before the "something there" becomes a spiritual awe of the Deity. And a feeling or experience, which is no doubt prominent in early culture, at the stage of spiritual religion becomes, in a sublimated form, an element within a complex whole of emotions and sentiments. The evolution of belief by which the

objects of reverence acquire increasing content and meaning thus reacts on the religious feelings and lends them a more complex and elevated character. In this way quite a new range of feeling-life comes into being, and this is one of the features which differentiate ethical and spiritual from primitive religion. The interplay of emotion and sentiment which characterises spiritual worship is made possible by the fuller content and deeper meaning which religious thinking has given to the Object of faith. The formless spirit has become a God with a definite character and ethical qualities.

To lay stress on the transcendent reference of religious belief is to assert what is important and, indeed, vital. Even in the beginnings of religion, as already noted, there is the consciousness that the object revered lies beyond the common things of experience. Nor is the associated feeling of mystery ever absent from the religious mind at any level of culture. And yet this is only one side of the truth. A God perfectly comprehended would not be the God of experience, but a God who was utterly incomprehensible could not be the object of trust and love. The conflict between this negative and this positive tendency is familiar to the student of Christian theology ; we see it in the Alexandrian Fathers, in Augustine, and in the Schoolmen. But in the end it has always become clear that the negative attitude must be supplemented by the positive, if the religious experience and life are to be justified. The God

whom man worships must stand in positive relations to him, and man must find in his own nature some clue to the character of the Deity whom he reveres. Otherwise worship loses its meaning.

At this point it may be well to summarise the main conclusions of the previous discussion. The sense of awe and mystery may be taken to describe the feeling-tone out of which religion emerges, and it is this feeling-tone which gives its character to the sacred. But religion is not created nor kept in being by a non-rational impulse pure and simple. Even rudimentary religious acts involve a cognitive element. The vague *numen*, as well as the soul or spirit which is reverenced, is referred to its place in the context of experience by an act of belief which is an activity of mind. These objects of belief receive quality and character through imagination, they become centres round which a cultus forms, and the cult in its turn develops a richer emotional life. At the various levels of naïve belief, imaginative thought, and reflective thinking, the mind strives to express the religious object, and in this long process the Divine is gradually translated from the mundane to the supramundane sphere. Yet the movement is only the unfolding of a principle which is present in religion at its beginnings, and whose scope and meaning gradually become clear. Dimly and crudely at first, but with a growing certainty, the religious spirit has come to see that its fulfilment lies beyond the mundane environment and the things of sense. The various

representations of the Divine mark the stages which the religious consciousness has traversed in this quest. In the course of the journey the *numen* or spirit has been gradually transformed into the transcendent God. The significance of the religious experience is suggested to us when we consider the way in which it has developed. The soul's search for God, if haply it may find Him, surely cannot be an aimless and a meaningless enterprise.

So far we have not tried to deal with the problem of the validity or truth-value of religious beliefs. Yet in any serious discussion of religious phenomena this issue cannot altogether be avoided. For there is no dispute that the religious mind claims truth for the objects of its belief, while it is just as patent that every such claim cannot be taken at its face-value. The special difficulty which meets us here arises from the fact that religious beliefs have a transcendent reference, while the supramundane object can only be expressed through mundane analogies and images, which are inadequate to define that object. Windelband, as we have seen, declares that feeling here sets representation a problem that is not soluble under the given conditions. We may admit the justice of this contention, and I think we may also add that, if faith could adequately envisage its object, the shifting of religious ideas and doctrines and the replacement of one by another would be unintelligible. Yet if we emphasise exclusively the transcendence of the Divine,

if we make much of the intrinsic defects of our religious representations, we may easily come to the conclusion that our religious ideas are futile efforts to express what is really inexpressible and are not true in any strict sense of the word. We may be confirmed in this conclusion by observing how freely the religious consciousness has criticised religious ideas in the course of its development, and if the new idea which replaced the old was for the time taken to be true, this assumption was in its turn shown to be untenable. The observer is impressed by the lack of finality in the field of religious ideas, and in the end perhaps sees only a dissolving panorama of beliefs where nothing is fixed and stable. So he becomes sceptical of the validity and value of all religious ideas. Religion turns into a kind of pathetic fallacy: it rests on the persistent illusion that man can express in terms of knowledge what really transcends knowledge.

The difficulties I am here indicating are often felt strongly, and something by way of answer to them should be attempted. You will notice that this criticism of the validity of religious beliefs rests on two considerations: on the one hand the historic conflict of religious ideas, and, on the other, the intrinsic inability of man to envisage religious truth. The latter is the more fundamental, and the former comes back to it.

Taken by itself, I should say that the argument drawn from the conflict of religious ideas and their rise and decay is not convincing. Some-

thing of the kind is involved in any process of development. To say that no religious idea is final is not to say that all are alike invalid. There can be no development without the existence of imperfection, for this makes possible a movement from the less to the more perfect. Hence the progress of science is to a large extent a process of revising and transforming conceptions inherited from the past. The thing to emphasise is not the fact that crude and material ideas of the Divine mark the earlier stages of religion and survive to some degree in the later. The important point is that the inadequacy of these ideas was a condition of progress, and as men became conscious of their inadequacy they strove to envisage religious truth in some better way. The older forms of belief, nevertheless, had a value for the stage of culture to which they belonged; men were able to express their religious experience through them, though at a new level of culture these beliefs had to be transformed to meet fresh and larger needs. An idea is not to be condemned as illusory because it comes to be inadequate in a higher cultural environment. The significant thing, I take it, is not that religious beliefs became inadequate but that they were transformed into something which was judged to be more adequate, and that, broadly, this process has taken the line of a development from the material to the spiritual. That this process is a development, is a judgment-of-value which we habitually make and cannot help making. And I find it impossible to understand how the

continuous criticism which the religious spirit has exercised on its beliefs could issue in a process of development unless the movement were guided by some growing vision of the Divine. There is no suggestion of a perfect representation of the Transcendent Reality; for a finite mind living in a realm of sense and time that is not possible. But if man is to become conscious of the inadequacy of old beliefs, and if he is to transform them gradually into a more spiritual faith, it can only be because he has some apprehension, dim and partial it may be, but yet real, of the God whom he seeks.

But, it may be objected, if we consider the way in which these changing beliefs are developed, we shall find reason to doubt that they can be construed as a movement towards fuller religious truth. The conditions under which they are framed forbid us to cherish any assurance of their validity. All our ideas of the Divine are infected with sensuous images which cannot be relevant, and if these are discarded what remains? The objection is an old one, and it has been often urged.[1] At the same time it appeals to many. So it is suggested that religious ideas, rooted as they are in false analogies, will become more and more nebulous and elusive as civilisation advances. May the so-called development of religious belief

[1] It goes back to Xenophanes:

'Αλλ' οἱ βρότοι δοκοῦσι γεννᾶσθαι θεούς,
τὴν σφετέρην δ' ἐσθῆτά τ' ἔχειν φωνήν τε δέμας τε.
(F. 5, Ritter and Preller, ed. 8, p. 79.)

not be a process which is leading to the dissolution of religion itself? May not this supposed progress be simply an advance towards disillusionment? We are asked to believe that the imposing fabric built up out of human hopes and fears will fade away like some unsubstantial pageant, and at last men will face the facts of life in the clear light of positive knowledge.

There is a good deal in the development of the religious consciousness which does not fit this theory. Remember that we are invited to regard the whole genesis and growth of religious beliefs as based on illusion; for religion is essentially mythical thinking, and this is a stage of human thinking which in the end will be superseded. The onus of proof here, one would say, lies with those who take up this extreme position. The religious experience is assuredly a fact; and if you are to maintain that the beliefs in which this experience expresses itself are all of them fictions, it falls to you to make good the statement. In this case we are not offered a proof but a prediction about the future, which really rests on a value-judgment about religion that is prejudiced. It is hard indeed to suppose that the religious attitude which grows out of the nature of man, a real being interacting with a real world, an attitude, moreover, which is practically universal, should be rooted in a mode of interpretation which is a mistake pure and simple. Again, if it were possible that a universal experience should create beliefs which had no point of contact with reality,

one does not understand how these beliefs should have a high working-value in life. A value that is to work must have some living relation to reality, and beliefs that have this kind of value cannot be alien to the nature of things. Moreover, if religious ideas were purely illusory, their persistence in human history seems inexplicable. A long series of illusions should in the end produce disillusionment, with the consequent abandonment of religion as superstition. But this is certainly not what has happened. Beliefs in course of time fade and decay, but they do so, not because they are discovered to be fictions, but because they no longer express the new needs of the spirit. The religious impulse is not weakened by this change in its expression. This persistence of the religious spirit in historic evolution is one of the most remarkable and impressive features in human culture. It warrants us in maintaining that the religious feeling and the religious need are intrinsic to human nature, otherwise they would not continue constant through all changes of the environment. But man stands in intimate relation to, or rather is part of, the universe within which he lives and acts. One would infer, therefore, that what is rooted in the nature of man must have a ground in the structure of reality itself. The development in an organism of a function which was not intimately related to the environment with which the animal had to deal would indeed be a mystery. The development and persistence of a religious faith which was not vitally related to

the universe within which man acts would be just as mysterious. If we are asked to regard religion as a kind of disturbing dream which has no relation to the sober world of reality, we can only reply that then we are baffled to know why this empty vision should ever have haunted us.

It is relevant and necessary to point out the difficulties in the position of those negative critics who are disposed to deny any validity to religious beliefs. So far as this has been done, the case for a more positive and sympathetic treatment of the religious experience is strengthened. On the other hand, to show that there are serious objections to the theory that religious beliefs are illusions does not help us much to solve the question how far and in what way these ideas can be regarded as true. Plainly, this can only be done if it is possible to form some constructive conception of the function and meaning of these beliefs and of their relation to what is ultimately real. Here the grave trouble is that the final object of religious belief or faith, the object on which the whole spiritual structure depends, is transcendent, and therefore cannot be adequately expressed in terms of representation. To meet this difficulty it may be urged that transcendence is only apparent, and is not to be taken as real. But any attempted synthesis of the mundane and transcendent into some higher order or system would imply that the transcendent lost its specific character, and this would mean that justice was not done to an essential aspect of the religious experience. If,

then, we refuse to follow this path, we have to accept the conclusion that the Divine or transcendent can never be perfectly expressed by religious ideas at any stage of their development. Truth as perfect correspondence with reality will not work in the religious sphere; for we do not know the transcendent Object in a way which would make it possible for us to say how far particular beliefs accurately correspond to it or diverge from it. In other words, we have no absolute standard of theoretical knowledge at our disposal which will serve to define with certainty the degrees of truth and error in our religious judgments. Nor in this case does the Kantian principle that God is transcendent but a postulate of the practical reason help us. For the content of the idea of God here remains vague, and it could not be applied to historic beliefs to determine the degree of validity which may attach to them.

There is no way of escape from this dilemma if the negative or transcendent aspect of the religious Object, though essential, is taken to be the whole truth. But, as we have argued, there is a complementary and positive aspect, and this is vital to the working of the historic religious consciousness. If God is beyond the world and finite spirits, He also stands in an intimate and living relation to them; if He is transcendent Ground, He is also immanent Causality. Only in virtue of this positive relation is that working of God on human spirits, which is termed "revelation,"

possible, and this is the ultimate source of the religious experience itself. In this fact lies the guarantee that the religious consciousness is grounded in the inmost nature of reality. I have said " in this fact," but it would be more true to say " in this faith," for the synthesis is an act of faith which cannot be resolved into a truth of reason. Still, in a broad sense we may say that it is a " reasonable " faith, for it gives a coherent view of the phenomena of religion and imparts to them a satisfying meaning and value.

But if religious experience has a real basis through the activity of the Transcendent Ground in and upon finite spirits, we have yet to inquire what truth belongs to the varying representations of the Divine which have emerged in religious history. These representations, at first prompted by religious emotion, afterwards become more or less conscious interpretations of religious experience as a whole, and they reflect at every stage the mental and spiritual culture of the social order from which they emerge. They are throughout " anthropic interpretations," to borrow a useful phrase : in other words they give positive content to the idea of the Divine in terms of man's own life and experience. But though these representations are and must be inadequate, they are not of necessity false, and we shall certainly be disposed to take this view if we hold that man in his deeper nature has some affinity with God.

Still, when all is said, these general considera-

tions will not enable us to deal with the problem of the degrees of truth which belong to particular religious representations. This problem is not soluble, let me repeat, if you hold that the concept of truth in religion is the correspondence of an idea with the reality which it is supposed to represent. For the act of comparison would only be possible if the human mind had already an adequate knowledge of the reality to which the idea was affirmed to correspond. In this instance the transcendent Reality is not grasped by theoretical knowledge but is apprehended by faith. If this be so, it follows that our religious representations and our dogmas cannot be taken as accurate descriptions or as scientific definitions. If we assign them a degree of validity it must be on other grounds. In fact, the notion of truth as correspondence has only a limited application even in the mundane sphere, and it ceases to be of value in the religious sphere. We have to seek some other test for the validity of our religious beliefs.

In trying to deal with this problem we set out from the conviction that the religious experience, with the trend towards the transcendent which runs through it, is rooted in reality. For it springs, so we hold, from the action of the transcendent Ground of the universe on the human spirits which are in constant dependence upon it. In religious experience man is receptive, but he is also active. The interpretation put on this experience, whether it take the form of myth, dogma,

or symbol, is the work of the human mind striving to express the meaning of its religious emotions and needs. A relative test of the value of these emergent representations or ideas will be the measure in which they express the religious experience that is behind them. Let me illustrate. To reverence a spirit on whom man feels he depends for good or ill is more in harmony with the leading of the religious spirit than to reverence a fetish whose power the savage supposes he can manipulate for his own purposes. In the one case the feeling of dependence, which is vital to religion, is in some degree expressed; in the other it is perverted. Hence spiritism is a truer form of religious belief than fetishism, which is a reversion towards magic. For the same reason we judge that theism is a more valid form of religious belief than pantheism, for the religious consciousness is one of relation to its object, not of identity with it. The test of loyalty to the religious experience is therefore of value, but it requires to be supplemented. For this experience is not so fixed and stable that of itself it provides an infallible norm. It has developed and so far has changed; its specific character so far varies in the great historic religions, and it may appear in different types within the same social and cultural system. In one type, for example, the mystical element may predominate, and in another the reflective. If we are to rank one of these historic phases, or one of these types, higher than another, it must be on the ground of a judgment-of-value

which can claim to be more than a subjective impression. To secure objectivity and validity for our judgments is the perplexing problem involved in religious valuation. Nor does an appeal to authoritative revelation settle the matter; for in adjudicating between claims to revelation we come back in the long run to a judgment-of-value.

The inquiry then takes the form of an examination how far we can determine, on grounds of value, the degree of objectivity in religious ideas, or, in other words, how far do they express what is real. This, I take it, is all we can mean when we assert what degree of validity belongs to an ultimate religious belief.[1] It is clear, of course, that every belief cannot claim the same objectivity. The very fact of the transformation of earlier beliefs in the process of religious development is an evidence that the religious mind is conscious that they do not sufficiently express the reality which is implied in religious experience. If monotheism, for example, supplants polytheism, while the opposite process does not take place, monotheistic faith must be the better embodiment of the religious spirit; it must be the fuller expression of its inner nature. Now, here and elsewhere in religion the test is not so much the subjective feeling or impression of value, a feeling which fluctuates, as the value that works in society and the historic religious life. The field of vision has to be wider

[1] On the other hand, derivative religious beliefs, which interpret from a religious point of view facts within the world of common experience, must be consistent with our scientific knowledge of the world.

than that of the individual history. Not every idea will prove a working-value in religion, and some ideas which have possessed working-value at a given time and place, or even have continued through an epoch, fail to maintain their value in the developing religious life. Thus the idea that the Deity could be propitiated by the sacrifice of animals persisted for long in many lands, but it faded away as the religious spirit came to a deeper consciousness of its own meaning. The sustained and extended working of a religious idea gives it a claim, therefore, to rank above those beliefs which have only a restricted life. We must also bear in mind that the notion of value as working has implications which are not always recognised. That an idea should work does not simply depend on the caprice of individuals or societies. You cannot make an idea work by merely willing that it should do so. If the phrase means anything it means that a belief works within the real order of things, and this has a nature of its own and is not purely plastic to the will of man. Hence the concept carries with it a reference both to the nature of man and to the nature of the reality within which he emerges and upon which he acts. Consequently degrees of working-value express degrees of congruence with reality taken in the large sense which includes the objective as well as the subjective factors. In this way they serve as an index of truth-value.

At this point perhaps I may be asked, What precisely do you mean by working-value? The

phrase, if convenient, is apt to be vague, and suggests further questions. If the value works, to what end does it work ? What is the issue of its working ? In the sphere of natural science one would say that a hypothesis worked if it served to unify a group of phenomena, if it supplied a principle by which man could envisage their mutual relations so as to enable him to manipulate them for his own purposes. In the ethical and religious sphere the notion of working does not denote an intellective synthesis but a practical, a synthesis of life. In this domain the value that works is the value that expands and enriches the social and personal life. More specifically, a religious belief will have this value if it uplifts and purifies society and the individual, so that the good becomes more real in human lives. For in goodness lies man's affinity with that transcendent Good we name God. The goodness of a spiritual character is an ultimate judgment-of-value: it is intrinsic, not instrumental, and we cannot evaluate it in terms of something other than itself. What we call social good has its focus and highest expression in this personal form. A religious idea, accordingly, will substantiate its claim to work in the degree that it ministers to the development of personal and spiritual character. Religious beliefs are indeed social values ; but the significant fulfilment of the working of values in the social medium is to be found in the inner character of the persons who compose society and sustain its well-being.

In trying to gather up the threads of this discussion let me remind you of the ontological basis of religious feeling and experience. It had its ultimate condition, so we contended, in the action of God as transcendent Ground of the universe on souls. This activity of the Divine within man is the secret of the religious consciousness, of its trend towards the transcendent world, and of the distinction it draws between the sacred and the profane. The religious life, however, is social, and so cannot be confined to the obscure and shifting emotions of the individual. But in order that religion may make a real advance on its social side it must express its meaning in common beliefs or representations of the Divine; it is the nature of religion to do this, and there would be no real religious development if it did not do so. Hence the world of myths, doctrines and symbols comes into being, and for these the religious mind claims truth. But these forms of representation, inasmuch as they refer to transcendent Reality, are all of them imperfect, and there are no means at our disposal which would enable us to determine the exact degree of theoretical truth which they may contain. Yet, as we tried to show, the religious experience has its roots in reality, and we found a broad test of the validity of religious beliefs in the way in which they fulfil the religious nature and work within the historic religious life. The notion of truth as correspondence of an idea with a reality beyond it falls away. On the other hand, the degree in which a religious idea has

practical value in expressing man's religious nature is a measure of the reality it contains.

The line of thought we have been following suggests to us that there is much in the language of religious belief which is of the nature of symbol. As a full and accurate delineation of religious reality neither the image, nor even the dogma which is the product of reflexion, can be regarded as adequate. It cannot be otherwise with us, for *videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate.* It does not follow that the religious idea, whether it takes the form of doctrine or symbol, is no more than a useful fiction by which we denote something which defies comprehension. In the case of those thinkers who reduce scientific conceptions and formulæ to convenient fictions which enable us to manipulate Nature for our purposes, it is surely clear that these "fictions" would not "work," as they undoubtedly do, if they were not more than mere fictions. With equal justice we may contend that man could never have organised his religious life and developed his spiritual nature under the guidance of ideas which were devoid of any content of truth. It would be passing strange if a noble spiritual character could be formed by illusions. The symbol as such does not claim to be theoretically adequate, but it expresses in a figurative form elements in the religious experience which are grounded in the ultimately real. If I speak of God as a Father I am using an earthly image in a sphere where it is bound to be insufficient. Nevertheless, as a

symbol it contains a substance of truth, for it envisages in a human image the relation of the Supreme Spirit to finite spirits. A symbol, then, is justified when it conveys to our minds values which are immanent in the religious consciousness and the religious life. Its measure of validity will correspond to the degree in which it expresses these values. On this principle we should unhesitatingly say that the idea of God as a personal Spirit has a far greater truth-value than the idea of God as an impersonal Reality.

From the point of view of naturalism religion must be a strange intrusion into a universe which has no real room for it, an intrusion that, on the premises of naturalism, is inexplicable. Our suggestion, on the contrary, is, that the religious experience is *bene fundatum;* it is intimately related to the nature of man and to the nature of the world with which he interacts, and it ultimately rests on the operation of the transcendent Ground of the universe on finite spirits. The presence of the Divine within him is the secret why man can win no full and abiding satisfaction from his natural environment. He is impelled to look beyond : he seeks God because he is first sought of God, and under this inner leading he has slowly passed from material to spiritual conceptions of the Divine. The genesis and growth of religious beliefs are endeavours to interpret the religious experience and the Reality on which it depends. Nowhere are these representations sheer illusions, but their degree of validity and value corresponds

in the main to the level of spiritual culture at which man stands. The claim to theoretical adequacy and finality made in behalf of religious representations is psychologically and historically intelligible, though it must fail, for it ignores the conditions under which such representation is possible as well as the character of the Divine Object. The last word in religion is not knowledge, but faith. If this be so, then doubt can never be finally eliminated, and in our human history there will always be room for "the spirit that denies." In the long run a man's attitude to religion rests on a personal judgment-of-value, but this judgment-of-value should not be that of a detached and disinterested spectator who surveys the field from a watch-tower apart. For it is only within the life of religion itself that its ground in Reality is felt and experienced.[1] Therefore to establish vital contact with religion on its inner side is the condition of its right appreciation.

[1] In the recently published lectures of the late Prof. Cook Wilson there is a paper on "Rational Grounds of Belief in God." In this paper he makes the suggestive remark: "No argument from design can have the effect of a single experience of the emotion of reverence and awe." *Statement and Inference*, Vol. II., p. 865.

III

EVOLUTION AND THE FINALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

THE germs of the theory of evolution are to be found in the old Greek thinkers, but the great vogue and influence of the doctrine dates only from last century. During that period the conception was defined, formulated, and applied in the most striking ways to the phenomena of Nature and life. The evolutionary method, the method which proceeds genetically, tracing the complex and highly articulated to the simple and elementary, became a recognised principle of investigation in various spheres, and whatever doubts may remain in regard to its ultimate scope and meaning, the principle itself is widely accepted as one of the solid gains of scientific thinking. No competent thinker would now examine a problem in biology or psychology without bringing to bear on it the light shed by the idea of development. To do so has become a part of scientific method.

I shall not concern myself in this paper with the disputes which once ran high between geologists and Darwinians on the one hand and orthodox theologians on the other. The din of that controversy has died away, and it is now apparent

that what is vital in religion is not bound up with certain doctrines about the age of the earth and the temporal origin of man. Christianity has survived the advent and reign of evolution, just as it survived that of the Copernican astronomy. On the other hand, the application of the developmental method in the realms of psychology and history, and especially in the study of religions, has raised problems of a new kind, and the bearing of the issues thus raised upon Christianity is still a subject of discussion and controversy. That civilisation is a development will not be denied, since every social order has grown out of the past and bears within it the germs of the future. The same will be admitted to hold true of religion as an element in culture, and all historic religions exhibit the characteristic features of growth. Every living religion changes and grows through interaction with its cultural environment. No doubt the kind of development in the historic sphere is not quite the same as in the natural world, because the moving forces here are not so much natural causes and conditions as ends and values which are the objects of will. None the less these ends and values are not arbitrary: they issue from the historic life, and are themselves subject to a process of development. Now, values are essential to religion, and so we have to face the fact that Religion, just like Art and Philosophy, is caught up in the developmental movement; we have to reconcile this fact, if we can, with the claim of religion to contain abiding truth.

At the same time, it is plain that the idea of development, if it creates a difficulty for religion, also confers an advantage. From the developmental point of view the phenomena of religion are seen in a larger and more suggestive light, so that difficulties which troubled our forefathers no longer trouble us. To take an illustration: the cruder elements in Old Testament religion which provoked the artificial and allegorical method of interpretation no longer cause us concern.

Yet if evolution sheds light, it also induces perplexities, and especially for those who are not prepared to abandon the historic claims of Christianity. Let me try to show how the issues shape themselves.

The thorough-going evolutionist sees religion, like the civilisation in which it has a place, involved in a process of change. Everywhere the simple is growing complex, and the old is being fashioned into something new. Fixity and permanence are absent and finality is nowhere to be found, for where all move nothing continues in one stay. Look back into the past and you behold religions coming to birth, maturing, and at length growing old and vanishing away. Faiths have died with the civilisations from which they sprang. No doubt some of them have lasted long, but this is no pledge that any one will endure always. In this secular process

> "Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole."

And even though a religion to outward appearance

remains the same, it is not really so. New meanings are read into ancient forms; the doctrines handed down from the past receive a different emphasis, or are allowed to sink into the background; and as the historic values change, the inner significance of a religion changes with them. The onward-moving historical life out of which emerge ever-changing ideas of man, the world, and God, seems to forbid any valid claim to finality. In short, finality is an illusion. "The evolutionary method," said Pfleiderer in one of his latest books, "knows no absolute within the phenomenal world, but everywhere and always only the relative." In history, as Harnack has remarked, absolute judgments are impossible.[1] If this be so it seems hopeless to assert absoluteness for any religion, even if that religion be Christianity. For to do so seems to ignore the fact that Christianity itself is taken up into the moving stream of the historic life.

That there are elements of truth in these contentions I am far from denying; indeed, it is just because the pleas put forward do contain truth that we have to meet real difficulties if we assert that Christianity is an absolute and final religion. To meet the argument—and you cannot meet it by denying the fact of evolution—you have to show how and in what respect the fact of development leaves the claim to absoluteness unshaken. It is

[1] *What is Christianity*, p. 18. Cp. Troeltsch's paper, *Uber historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, II., p. 735.

certainly hard to point out any religious institution, rite, or doctrine which has held its place within the historic process impervious to change. Yet if you admit that Christianity is an ever-changing complex of forms and beliefs with nothing ultimate in it, you open the door wide to scepticism and agnosticism. If every element in Christian faith has merely a relative value, then with the shifting of the historic value-scheme our relative values may be changed out of recognition. Plainly, such a complete relativism would cripple the full assurance of faith, and if we really believe that there is nothing before us but relative goods, we may come in the end to doubt whether these are even relatively good.

I need not say that the attitude and temper of mind I have been describing are hostile to the spirit and outlook which have marked historic Christianity. The religion of Christ would never have grown and prospered had men merely regarded it as a heritage for their own time, a form of religion which was best suited to meet the needs of a given moral and spiritual situation. A relative value is one thing, "an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast" is another. Christianity—and for that matter other religions also—has always proceeded on the assumption that there is something absolute in it. Otherwise there could be no buoyant and vigorous religious faith, for to demand that in the deepest things of life faith should lay hold on a probability, or on what is known to be only relatively true, is to cut

the nerve by which faith moves. I may be told, however, that while this is psychologically true, and faith claims absoluteness for its content, this absoluteness is merely naïve, to use Troeltsch's term: the real crux of the problem is to reconcile this naïve absoluteness with the claims of scientific and historic knowledge. I frankly admit there is a problem here, and it may be granted at once that the claims of most religions to absoluteness cannot be maintained in the face of historic facts. To say nothing of primitive and national religions, Islam, for instance, makes this claim, but Christians refuse to admit it. It is clear, therefore, that the fact that a claim to finality is made, and that the religion would not have grown and prospered if it had not been made, is of itself no guarantee that the claim can be justified. If we are to defend the claim we must somehow be able to go beyond the psychological demand for absoluteness, and show there is some sense in which the claim can be sustained in the face of criticism and historic knowledge. This is a task from which the theologian should not shrink, and it is one of the hardest and most urgent duties of present-day apologetics.

It will help to clear the ground, and it will also serve to define the issues, if we consider in some little detail the way in which earlier thinkers and theologians have grappled with this question of the finality or absoluteness of religion. The Catholic as well as the older Protestant theologians proceeded on the assumption that Christianity

was a unique religion. It was founded on a supernatural revelation of God that had been denied to all other religions, and these religions, being the product of man's unaided powers, were all more or less false. This revelation was embodied in the Bible, which was the pure word of God and so infallible and supremely authoritative. The Word of God, as we all know, was the bulwark of early Protestantism. Yet something more was needed if conflicting interpretations of the Word were to be avoided, and the Reformers found the ultimate tribunal in the Holy Spirit speaking through the Scriptures. In substance the finality of Christianity was based on a supernatural revelation, divinely safeguarded from error in its expression, and therefore perfectly authoritative.

Though I do not think this view was utterly false, it was stated by the Reformers in a fashion and with a scope which are now recognised to be impracticable. Hegel, I believe, once remarked that all the sects justified themselves from scripture, for they all took out of it what they desired to find. The rise of sects was, in point of fact, an object-lesson which showed that the process of interpretation gave discordant results even though fortified by an appeal to the Spirit. Moreover, the study of origins and the growth of criticism have profoundly modified our ideas of the Bible since the days of Luther and Calvin. Belief in verbal inspiration has well-nigh vanished, and as a consequence the conviction that the Bible is an infallible and supernatural authority throughout

has largely passed away. To the scripture-writings themselves the idea of development has been applied, and a historic view of the growth of the Biblical literature has taken the place of the older view. Instead of one stereotyped system of beliefs we now recognise in the Bible various stages of doctrine, not always consistent with one another but all of them related to the developing religious life. In many ways this enlarged outlook has been a real gain to faith, and it has enabled men to perceive that any revelation must be coloured and modified by psychological and historical conditions. On the other hand it is plain that the old Protestant conception of authority has been undermined, and it is no longer possible to defend effectively the finality of Christianity by an appeal to the Bible as a whole. For the sphere of relativity has been extended to the Bible. Indeed one has to face the fact that in Protestant lands to-day there is a widespread reaction against an appeal to this form of authority. "In our days the appeal to mere authority seems the most hopeless," remarks a contemporary writer, and the wise apologist recognises the fact and reckons with it.[1] The consequences of this shaking of the old foundations are only too apparent. There is uncertainty and there is unsettlement of mind about religion, and this has brought genuine distress to souls which long for assurance and peace. To certain types of mind the situation is intolerable, and they end

[1] Gardner, *Evolution in Christian Theology*, p. 21.

by an act of submission to a church which claims to be absolutely authoritative.[1] This is to cut the knot, not to untie it.

At this point let us consider whether the Roman Catholic claim to authority is more tenable than that of the Protestant Reformers. To begin with it is evident that the infallibility of scripture is also an article of the Romish faith, and is open to the same historical and critical objections. But with Roman Catholicism the Bible does not stand alone: alongside it and possessing equal authority and value stands the tradition of the divinely founded and inspired Church. Under its inspired guidance the *depositum fidei* contained in the infallible scripture has been explicated, defined, and formed into a complex whole of ritual and doctrine. There is an attempt here to combine finality with development of a kind. We are invited to believe that out of the original and divinely given deposit of faith the complex structure of the Catholic faith has been gradually and inevitably evolved by a process of explication. At each stage there is finality, for no approved dogma is ever discarded, though it may receive fuller definition and acquire a wider meaning and reference. The system is said to be absolute for the end is already preformed in the beginning, and the whole is beyond human criticism or modification.

The argument looks impressive, but on closer

[1] This may partly account for what Heiler in his book, *Der Katholizismus*, calls the modern trend (*Zug*) towards Catholicism.

examination is seen to depend on most dubious assumptions. That the whole structure of Catholicism was implicit in the original deposit is an hypothesis that will not stand the searchlight of criticism. Equally unsound is the supposition that the Church in the evolution of its doctrine was so divinely guided as to be exempt from error. To say so is to ignore the varied psychological and historical motives and influences which entered into the process of growth. Moreover, the notion of development as addition by explication is false: all true development as organic implies criticism, transmutation, and reconstruction. On these grounds the claim of the Romish Church to finality must be held to fail.

In his Essay on "The Development of Doctrine" Newman has tried to set forth the notes of a true development, and among them he signalises "chronic vigour" and "assimilative power." The latter feature is characteristic of organic process, but Newman, though he drew attention to the organic principle, did not apply it in any whole-hearted way; he still clings to the idea of development as explication. But where Newman stopped short the Roman Catholic Modernists have come forward with a more thorough and far-reaching application of the principle. For them religious evolution is vital, assimilative and creative, and carries with it the criticism and transformation of existing elements. The orthodox Catholic doctrine of "pre-formation" is rejected, the conclusions of advanced criticism are accepted,

and the idea of an infallible book or person is abandoned. Frank admission is made that the body of Catholic doctrine and the sacramental system cannot be based on the teaching of Jesus himself. As Tyrrell has put it, "We have outgrown the apocalyptic form in which the spirit of Jesus first uttered itself. But the spirit itself we have not outgrown."[1] The Modernist lays stress on growth and expansion under the leading of the spirit; he refuses to be trammelled by the framework of Scholastic theology, and puts forward a view of development in which doctrines undergo change and modification through interaction with the life and thought of the age. Doctrines are tested by their working-value rather than by conformity to a deposit of faith or to the tradition of the Church. So far as the Modernist endorses the Pragmatic principle he must sacrifice the notion of absolute truth, and it is hard to see how, on such lines, any claim to finality could be made good. For the stress is always laid on progress, not on permanence, nor can there be any certainty about the direction which development will follow. In fact the trend of Catholic Modernism is not towards finality but towards relativism; and an emphasis on relativism leads naturally, as may be seen in Loisy, towards scepticism. The less radically minded of the party no doubt hold that by a continuous evolution the spirit is gradually leading the Church into fuller truth.

Modernism finds it hard to point to any per-

[1] *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 267.

manent or absolute element in the Christian faith, and this is one consequence of its drastic criticism of Christian origins. In another way the treatment of the problem by the Protestant speculative theology suffers through the same defect, the defect of cutting itself free from the historical basis of Christianity. Hegel, in his *Philosophy of Religion,* regards Christianity as the absolute religion, and maintains that in it the whole spiritual evolution of mankind is consummated. But what he takes to be final is not the common doctrines of the Church, which for him are only figurative representations of those speculative truths that it is the function of philosophy to elicit. What is absolute in Christianity is the speculative principle of the union of God and man, Infinite and finite, in the concrete universal or Idea. The finality in this case is really that of a specific philosophical system, not that of a historic religion. The same tendency to separate the historical from the ultimate or universal is seen in theologians like Biedermann and Pfleiderer who have been influenced by Hegel. Pfleiderer insists that we must distinguish the divine principle from the historical Jesus; and he tells us the ideal cannot be identified with an individual, for the ideal is unconditioned and absolute. In other words the only absolute in the religion of Christ is a principle, the principle of a divine-humanity. When we recognise this, then, it is said, the way is open for what is termed a free historical treatment of the life and work of Christ. The trouble

here is, that the finality is merely that of a speculative principle, and this will inevitably be modified as the fashion of philosophic thought changes. More serious is the objection that in this way Christianity is separated from its historic basis, and in the end the constitutive power in Christian experience has been a person rather than a general principle. If there is nothing final in Christ himself, I doubt that we shall find finality anywhere.

The reaction against the speculative method in theology was for a time very marked, and nowhere did it find more pointed utterance than in Ritschl and some of his followers. The reaction, though extreme, had the merit of setting in the foreground the truth that Christianity is a historic religion and has its roots deep in the historic life. It must therefore be treated by the historical method. Theologians such as Harnack and Bousset seek to strip the religion of false and accidental elements due in the main to the intrusion of philosophical ideas, and by historic investigation to determine what is essential and final; and this they find in the message of Jesus himself. So we reach the living core in the Gospel of divine Fatherhood, of human brotherhood, and of the kingdom of God ethically conceived. This seems simple and straightforward, but the enquiry is not so unbiassed as it appears. The theologians bring their own values with them, and select what is essential in the light of them. If Harnack rejects the apocalyptic element in primitive

Christianity, it is not on purely historical grounds. More dubious still is the assumption that what is final is Christ's gospel rather than Christ himself: the truth is, that if you separate the gospel from the person the development of Christianity becomes a mystery. The guarantee that there is anything ultimate in the message of Jesus does not lie in selected parts of the teaching but in the personality.

A broader handling of the problem will be found in the work of Troeltsch, who is also more fully conscious of the difficulties which are involved.[1] He recognises that an answer is not to be found by the mere process of simplifying and eliminating, and he believes that the absoluteness of Christianity cannot be properly discussed without considering the claims of other religions. The religio-historic method at least furnishes a broad basis for discussion. The problem, as Troeltsch envisages it, is that of restating the naïve absoluteness of Christian faith in a form which is compatible with modern scientific and historical knowledge.[2] This cannot be attained by the artificial method of the traditional Apologetics with its assumption of an external authority, and with its idea of a divine revelation removed from criticism and human additions. Nor can it be achieved by the so-called evolutionary absolutism which treats Christianity as the realisation of

[1] *Die Absolutheit des Christenthums*, 1912.

[2] Troeltsch draws a clear distinction between the naïve absoluteness of a vigorous faith and the artificial absoluteness of a mature religion, an absoluteness which is based on theories and proofs. *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

the idea of religion. For this too Troeltsch reckons to be artificial. The modern situation demands an enlarged historic horizon, and Christianity with its scriptures and its dogmas must be embraced in the religio-historic point of view. On this basis it is possible to show the supremacy of Christianity over all other religions, and so far as our historic knowledge goes we have no ground for supposing that it will eventually be superseded. This, as Troeltsch admits, will not be deemed enough, but the question is, Can we go further ?

One can see in Troeltsch's book on the *Absoluteness of Christianity,* two tendencies working in his mind. On the one side there is a distinct antagonism to what he calls ecclesiastical supernaturalism, and to any claim to authority based upon it. The result is that Christianity figures for him as one religion among many, supreme, no doubt, yet not different in kind, and always subject to modification from its cultural environment. Indeed only when taken in connection with the wider historic life can it be understood. On the other side he feels there is something specific in Christianity, and this must be taken into account in any attempt to decide how far it can be regarded as final. I am not sure that he succeeds in reconciling these tendencies. But Troeltsch believes that the religio-historic method enables us to escape a dilemma, the dilemma either of accepting a strict supernaturalism which is linked with anti-rationalism, or of embracing a rationalising theology which comes to be opposed

to the original meaning of Christianity.[1] He is right, it seems to me, in concluding that the validity of Christianity is bound up with the fact for which Christ stands, or, as I should prefer to put it, with the fact of Christ himself. But if the fact is to lead us any way towards the finality of the religion, we seem committed to a faith in the supernatural of some kind, though I do not think that this involves a total difference in kind between one religion and all other religions. Troeltsch's treatment of the whole subject is highly suggestive, but it suffers from a certain vagueness in the use of the term supernatural as well as from a somewhat facile endorsement of the idea that the religio-historic method must discard it. I cannot see that, if you regard Christ as a revelation from the transcendent sphere, as Troeltsch appears to do, it is consistent to construe the supernatural as a mere survival of an outworn mode of thought.

In the light of the foregoing survey I venture to offer some further remarks on the question at issue. In view of the previous discussion we shall set aside the argument from an external authority as no longer convincing, nor shall we contend that finality can be established by rational proof. If we assert, for instance, that the Christian religion is final, meaning by this that it will never be superseded in human history, then our judgment, like every judgment about the future, is not capable of demonstration. From existing historic phenomena you cannot draw a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

cogent inference about what will be a thousand or two thousand years later. If you do affirm finality it must be by an act of faith, not by a process of reasoning, and this faith will in the main be determined by value-experiences of the Christian religion. Needless to say an absolute uniformity of judgments will not ensue under these conditions; and if many believe that Christian faith is the last word in religion, there are others who suppose that agnosticism will be the ultimate creed of men. From the psychological standpoint the assurance of faith will suffice. Individuals like Paul and Luther found a token of absolute truth in the personally experienced saving power of Christ, and the claim to finality is based on the certainty that Christ is the one way to God.

Nevertheless historic Christianity is more than a simple soteriological principle: it is a complex of ritual, doctrine, and institutional forms, and one has to decide how much the claim to finality covers. In the matter of ritual and organisation Christian Churches differ widely, and a plea for exclusive truth in these things could only rest on an illegitimate appeal to external authority. Even those who accept such an authority are not agreed on what it prescribes, and those who recognise that it is futile to appeal to authority on these points do not claim finality in such matters.

The case may seem different in regard to doctrine. It may be argued that there are fundamental and permanent doctrines common to all Christians, doctrines which cannot be discarded

without disrupting the continuity of the faith. Doctrines, it will be urged, are not adventitious elements, they are not excrescences on religion, they express its meaning in generalised form; and if there is no finality in them, it seems difficult to claim finality for the religion of which they are an integral part.

At first sight this contention seems plausible, but on closer examination it becomes less convincing. In the first place it is plain that theology, which is the outcome of the reflecting and combining activity of the human mind, is not itself an inspired product; it cannot rank as revealed truth, nor is it exempt from error and removed from criticism. History, moreover, records that doctrines have often been developed amid the strife of factions, and may represent the victory of one party or a dubious compromise between parties. Nor is it the case that dogmas once fixed become thereafter identical and unchanging truths amid the changing life of the church. An eye which looks beneath the surface discerns that the fixity is illusory. The same doctrine has not precisely the same meaning for every individual. Moreover, each age sees the dogmas of the faith reflected in the medium of its own life, and the historic process is constantly bringing about changes of emphasis and valuation. Doctrines which once filled the foreground of the religious stage fall into the background, or are silently discarded, while others which remain are seen in a new perspective and with a fresh range of mean-

ing. Thus the primitive Christian apocalyptic and eschatology are neglected now, or only survive in a highly transmuted form. Each age brings its own experience and consciousness of values to the doctrinal interpretation of Christianity. If this be so, as I believe it is, the idea of an immutable system of doctrine is illusory, and as history moves onward men will always strive to formulate anew the theological heritage of the past.

In truth doctrine, while essential to a developed religion, is not fundamental: it arises out of and rests upon a religious experience which it seeks to interpret. It is religion as a life-experience which creates theology, and apart from this experience there would be nothing for theology to explain. If this be so, then the Christian experience is primary, for it creates, vitalises, and sustains Christian doctrine. Our problem, therefore, takes this form: Is there anything absolute and ultimate in the Christian experience?

There will, I think, be no doubt anywhere that Christian faith as an inner experience is, and always has been, linked with Christ. Most people will agree that, in some sense, Jesus is the source and centre of the Christian consciousness, and this not as a mere principle but as a historic and inspiring life. But our difficulties begin when we enquire whether this experience takes a specific, identical and enduring form which we can claim to be absolute and final. Certain it is that the beliefs and values through which the experience has expressed itself have undergone changes in

the course of time. To the primitive Christian Jesus was the Messiah soon to return in the clouds of heaven to usher in the Messianic kingdom. To the mediæval Catholic Christ was envisaged in the medium of the sacramental system through which his sacrifice was continually repeated for the subvention of human need. The modern Christian more often finds satisfaction in the faith that Jesus is the revelation of the Father's redeeming love. The figure of the Master, instead of abiding the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever" seems to shift and alter as it is mirrored in the changing media of Christian history. If this has been so in the past, have we any right to claim finality for Christ as we see him now, and to deny that the future will bring further changes? In truth if we identify Christ with the interpretations and values which are associated with him, it is hard to see how we can find here the absoluteness which we could not discover in religious doctrines as a whole. Finality, if you can call it so, appears only to lie in the process of religious development itself.

But if any one is tempted to come to this conclusion, there is a point I would urge him to consider. People sometimes speak as if meanings and values were purely the creation of the experient mind and will. Pragmatists, for instance, insist that truths are just values which stand for satisfactions of the will. But those who talk in this fashion forget that there would be no values if there were nothing to valuate, no reasoning if

there were nothing to rationalise, no interpretations if there were nothing to interpret. Values and meanings are not free creations of the subject; if they depend partly on the subject they also depend partly on the object, and are so far conditioned by it. You do not make things by valuing them any more than you make the ground by walking on it; there must be something in the character of the object which goes to determine the value we find in it. And this is transparently so when the object of our valuation is another personality. Here no doubt valuations may differ, but they differ within limits, and they are ultimately controlled by facts. All this has a clear bearing on the problem we are discussing. Behind the meanings and values of the experience of Christ is Christ himself, the fundamental fact which has made all these interpretations and valuations possible. So the question arises whether there is not something ultimate in this fact and its implications, implications which are not doctrinal constructions but elementary presuppositions out of which these constructions may develop. The answer will depend on the specific nature of the fact.

At this point, so it appears to me, the religio-historic method, with its insistence on strict continuity, may prove inadequate. True it is that religious origins and spiritual movements have light cast on them by the historic situation and its cultural relations. But an aid to understanding comes far short of a complete explana-

tion, and I do not believe that great religious personalities, and least of all the creative personality of Christ, can ever be fully explained on these lines. We seem here compelled to admit the entrance of new creative forces into the historic life, forces which no doubt have a relation to the environment in which they appear but are more than the outcome of that environment. It is not enough to say that the principle of continuity entitles us to reject this conclusion, for the argument from continuity is not now so convincing as it once seemed. Under stress of fresh evidence older ideas of evolution have had to be modified. The conception of epigenesis has replaced that of preformation, and in the notion of creative synthesis or emergent evolution there is the recognition that within the process of development new creations come into being which do not have their sufficient reason in pre-existing elements. Such are implied in the transition from instinct to intelligence, or from sense-perception to conception, or from reflex action to conscious volition. And what is true in biology and psychology is conspicuously true in the field of history. A great creative personality that gives a fresh direction to the historic life contains something new, something which has a deeper source than the historic environment.

I do not think the most radical critic, if he has historic insight and religious sympathy, will deny that Jesus Christ is a supreme and creative personality whose spirit has decisively influenced

human history as no other has done. His advent marks a turning point in human affairs, a catholic crisis in mundane history, the issues of which run right down to the present. The fact is there, and it is an arresting fact. How are we to regard it? The problem, as I see it, is not that of a theological construction of Christ's person: it is simpler and more fundamental and concerns the bearing of the fact on the order of things. A spiritual personality which so transcends its temporal environment must be the direct and purposive manifestation within the historic process of the transcendent and eternal Ground of all spiritual life. If not unled of God men seek Him if haply they may find Him, in Christ God turns directly to man. In this supreme disclosure of the Divine we have the authentic witness of the source from which we come and the goal to which we move, and source and goal alike are in the transcendent world. In virtue of this reference to the transcendent and eternal the fact of Christ is delivered from the dominion of relativity and has something absolute in it.

Do not regard the postulate of the transcendent as the intrusion of a speculative theory. The reference to a transcendent sphere is bound up with spiritual religion, and the presence of the transcendent within the historic life is demanded by the fact of Christ. In another way the working of moral and spiritual values within the developing time-world makes the same demand. For if our temporal values do not refer to and are not

sustained by a transcendent value, our temporal valuations become shifting and insecure, and we are condemned to what Eucken has called a "soulless relativity." If our varied and varying human values are not grounded in a transcendent value, the blight of scepticism will eventually fall on our moral and spiritual judgments. Therefore we cannot dispense with the transcendent. We hold then that the fact of Christ is a manifestation of the transcendent source of all spiritual life and a direction of spiritual energy to its ultimate goal. Here is a movement originating in the transcendent world, passing into the historic process, and leading forward in its issues into the supermundane and eternal. Christianity regarded as the supreme expression of the Divine Spirit entering into human history is absolute and final. The theological interpretation of this fact may change, but the reality abides.

I shall only add a word to meet certain difficulties which may suggest themselves. It will be said that the foregoing statement involves ideas which are not capable of proof, and so may not be universally accepted. That is so. But let me remind you that what we take to be ultimate, in the nature of the case is not susceptible of demonstration. All ἀπόδειξις, as Aristotle said long ago, runs back to ἀναπόδεικτα, propositions which are not proved but directly apprehended. And there is no philosophy at out disposal through which we can return in the end on our initial presuppositions and take them up into an all-

embracing system of truth. In stating what is implied in the fact of Christ I have only tried to set forth in simple language the reality with which we have to deal, the reality to which we have to return, the reality which will remain despite the changes and vagaries of human thought and opinion. The doctrinal system which commends itself to one age will not satisfy another, but the fact out of which the Christian experience has arisen will not grow old and vanish away.

Again some will say too much is claimed as fact, while others will maintain that too little is asserted. Here too I agree, for men approach the fact with different presuppositions. But perhaps the important question is how we can come to an assurance that there is this final element in Christianity. Now let me remind you that we have frankly abandoned the idea that the finality of the Christian religion can be proved by any scientific or historical method. For the conclusion will always go beyond what is contained in the premises. Any judgment about what is ultimate involves faith, and if we hold there is an absolute element in the religion of Christ our assurance will depend on an act of faith rather than on the exercise of reason. But this act of faith is not arbitrary or purely subjective. Nor is it, in its inner nature, the acceptance of a probability, as Butler might have said. For a true Christian faith emerges from the deep current of the spiritual experience which flows from Christ. And if it is the expression of what is personally

felt and realised, it is also guided and sustained by the historic experience out of which it develops. There can be no full assurance of faith apart from this experience, for otherwise faith lacks its living ground. It is simply the legitimate extension of this faith, personally realised and historically mediated, when the Christian turns from the present to the future, and declares that in the religion of Christ there is something of absolute value for every man that cometh into the world. In the enduring Christian experience which inspires and sustains such judgments, we have the witness that our faith is no illusion. The attempt to give a rational proof of the finality of the Christian religion will always fail, just because it is faith and not reason which gains that experience of value on which the assurance of finality rests.

IV

HISTORY AND ITS RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION

A GENERATION ago Professor Flint, in the Introduction to the new edition of his *Philosophy of History*, made the remark: "It requires but little perspicacity to foresee that thoughtful minds will soon be more generally and earnestly engaged in seeking to attain a philosophic comprehension of history than they have ever yet been."[1] And it is certainly true that during the past generation much energy has been expended in trying to grasp the principles of historical interpretation and explanation. But one can hardly say that great progress has been made towards a constructive Philosophy of History, although students are coming to understand better the difficulties and complications of the subject. As a consequence the inadequacy of earlier theories of the meaning of history are more fully realised.

The intrinsic interest of the subject is apparent, and it has vital issues which closely concern religion. We ask, for instance, Can human history be regarded as revealing a providential scheme, or can it not? Is the historic life the outgrowth of natural conditions, or is it guided by some divine

[1] *The Philosophy of History*, 1893, p. 1.

purpose? Much depends on the way in which we answer these questions, and yet a convincing answer is not easy.

Let me explain what I am to attempt in this paper. To give a preliminary survey of the growth of historical philosophy would carry me far beyond the space at my disposal. On the other hand, to grasp the present issues is hardly possible apart from some account, however slight, of the way the problem has defined itself. For the questions which now confront us about the meaning of history are the outcome of previous thought on the subject. After a brief historical retrospect, then, I shall seek to deal with the issues which present themselves to-day.

In the main the problem of the meaning of history did not trouble the classical world, for historical material was then scanty and vague. Plato and Aristotle were greatly concerned with political theories and the constitution of states; but their historical vision was circumscribed, and they felt little interest in distant peoples. The dim idea of a far-off golden age haunted the Greco-Roman world, and the belief that the former times were better gave a sombre colouring to the outlook on the present. This attitude is reflected in the familiar lines of Horace:

> Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?
> Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
> Nos nequiores, mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem.

Along with this impressionist and pessimistic

outlook lingered the idea that history ran in cycles. So Virgil writes :

> Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quae vehat Argo
> Delectos heroas ; erunt etiam altera bella,
> Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.

Here, however, we are moving in the realm of ancient myth and venerable sentiment rather than in the region of deliberate theory.

If we ask what turned the attention of men to history and awakened their minds to the problem which it presented, the answer must be that the change was largely due to the Christian religion. For Christianity, with its doctrine of man's divine origin, gave currency to the belief that the human race was a unity, and that Jew and Gentile alike had a value and a destiny. History had a divine meaning. Christ had come in the fulness of the time, but the past had been a preparation, and in the future the spiritual harvest would be gathered in. We have here the elements of a teleological and providential view of history which only needed to be developed by a man of spiritual genius and insight to become an impressive synthesis. It was Augustine, who first, in his *City of God*, sketched in broad yet bold outlines a religious philosophy of history. From Christianity he derived the idea that the race was originally one, and that there is a providence in human affairs. The vicissitudes of human fortunes and the rise and fall of empires are elements in a divine plan which is slowly but surely being realised. The unity of the race was broken by

the Fall; hence emerged the age-long antagonism of good and evil and the ever-growing contrast of the heavenly and the earthly cities. God's good purpose is revealed in the rise and development of the City of God, manifested alongside the kingdoms of this world but destined to outlast them all. The heavenly kingdom, when finally disclosed in its beauty and completeness, will include all the truly good who have ever lived. It would be easy to criticise Augustine's treatment of history, but his scheme has a certain grandeur and impressiveness. He presents us with a historic teleology which is comprehensive and divinely controlled: the shifting panorama of earthly events has always a religious meaning, for it bears a constant reference to a divine goal.

The Augustinian conception was revived by Bossuet in his *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle* in the seventeenth century. He added nothing essential to Augustine's idea, though he expounded the theme with unrivalled eloquence. It is an impressionist picture which Bossuet gives us: he discourses on history in order to convey to his readers the religious suggestions which he believes history was meant to convey. Despite his spiritual fervour we feel that his scheme is externally applied to history rather than developed out of it, and he is too sure of the intentions of the Deity. "God made use of the Assyrians and Babylonians to chastise His people, of the Persians to restore it, of Alexander and his immediate successors to exercise it."

If we pass to a time some hundred years after Bossuet's *Discours* we find the former confident reading of divine purpose into historic movements has vanished, and has been replaced by new and enlarged conceptions. The development of the historic life is now more closely connected with the nature of man, and the external method of explanation is discarded. Stimulated by the fertile mind of Rousseau new ideas about man and society were springing up, and these were reflected in the interpretation of history. In man himself, in the first instance, the meaning of the historic process was to be found. Thus Kant, in his *Idea for a Universal History*, sets forth the " idea of man " as a general clue to the understanding of history. The full unfolding of man's personality towards the highest good is, he suggests, the guiding idea which gives a satisfying meaning to the whole movement of history. To Herder we owe the term " Philosophy of History," and his great work *Ideas for a Philosophy of History* is a fresh and fertile development of the hints thrown out by Kant. For Herder history is a progressive movement in which the idea of humanity comes to ever fuller realisation. The phenomenon of growth in the natural world he sees continued in the spiritual, and he does not fully realise the difference between natural and spiritual development. His view of history is religious, yet he does not apply the religious conception to history but finds it there. But the " idea of humanity " is a vague conception, and to apply

it to the details of history as a test of progress would be neither easy nor convincing.

Hegel, in his *Philosophy of History*, owed a good deal to Herder, though his treatment is more subtle and profound. He distinguishes, in a way that Herder failed to do, between natural and spiritual evolution, and he recognises fully the conflicts and oppositions through which the Idea moves to its goal. But in saying that the essence of mind is freedom, and freedom is the ruling principle of history, he means what Herder meant in proclaiming that history is the evolution of the "idea of humanity." The Hegelian scheme seeks to be rational throughout, and neither in history nor elsewhere leaves any real room for contingency. The goal is already contained in the beginning; and if human agents appear to go their own way and seek their own ends, they are really being used as the instruments of the Idea in its march to the predetermined issue. When Hegel comes to apply his principle to the concrete material of history he can only do so in a very broad and often arbitrary way: selected races and nations are presented as the successive embodiments of the Idea in its course of development. Shall we say, then, that Hegel gives us a religious view of history? In one sense he does. For God as the Idea is all in all, and everything fits into its appointed place just as in the Calvinistic scheme of predestination. On the other hand, Hegel's theory does scant justice to the freedom and responsibility of individuals and peoples, and his method of dialectical evolution is

too formal a scheme to cast real light on concrete historical movements. The framework is too rigid to embrace the wealth of facts.

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* was a profound but premature attempt to show that a spiritual principle, cosmic in its range, controls the development of mankind. By the middle of the nineteenth century faith in speculative idealism had nearly vanished, and fresh motives and interests were stirring the minds of men. Knowledge of Nature and its forces was being swiftly extended, and along with this there came a wider vision of the varieties of human culture and the history of civilisations. Most important of all was the Darwinian theory with the subsequent application of the principle of evolution to society by Herbert Spencer and others. At first blush it seemed that here was a method which led to a clear and fruitful understanding of society and its growth, a method not elaborated by a venture of speculation but based on assured facts. Evolution, working through natural selection and the survival of the fittest, was not an hypothesis but a fact, and thinkers who realised imperfectly the limitations of the method set themselves with confidence to apply it in the social and historical field. The mode of explanation was naturalistic; a distinction between scientific and spiritual causality was not drawn, and man and his development were interpreted through interaction with the environment and its conditions. There is a passage in Mill's *Logic* which shows the assumptions on which

this procedure rests. Historical explanation, we are told, is complete, "if everyone of the leading general circumstances of each generation were traced to its causes in the generation immediately preceding."[1] Phrases like "social statics" and "social dynamics" used by Spencer suggest the implications of the method, and any difficulty we may have in predicting the future of a society is, we are told, simply due to our defective knowledge of all the causal elements at work in the past and present. But progress is certain, for it goes with evolution, which is a constant process from the simple and feebly differentiated to the complex and highly integrated. So Spencer announces that "the ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain, as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith, for instance, that all men will die." Progress, based on the fact of evolution and fortified by the contrast between civilised man and his ape-like ancestors, became a popular creed, and it was even thought to be inevitable. You will find an echo of the new faith in Tennyson's "Locksley Hall":

> Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
> That which they have been but earnest of the things which they shall do:
> For I dipt into the future far as human eye could see,
> Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

Tempora mutantur: to-day the enthusiasm of

[1] Vol. II., p. 519.

the Victorians is apt to provoke a smile. This belief in progress was a faith and an enthusiasm, but it rested on no convincing theory of man and society. It was largely based on an uncritical assimilation of the life of society to the life of Nature, along with the assumption that historic development must somehow be the counterpart of natural evolution. We can see that the essential nature of man as a psychical and spiritual being is here ignored, and he is construed as in the main a product of environmental conditions and laws. It is also apparent that naturalistic evolution taken as a key to history completely abandons the religious point of view. For this scheme dispenses with the notion of God and Providence : the past, present, and future of mankind are to be understood through the working of material and economic causes.

The faith of forty and fifty years ago in evolutionary progress has not maintained itself. Writers like Buckle and Mill were disposed to trace progress to the increase of intelligence, and that there has been a great increase in scientific knowledge no one denies. But men are coming to see that growth in knowledge of this kind does not of necessity mean an advance in human well-being ; though knowledge comes wisdom may linger. Before the close of the nineteenth century thoughtful students of history were calling in question the naturalistic interpretation of the historic life, and especially were disputing the theory that progress was a necessary process. The human factors so essential

in the historic life seemed to yield no such assurance. And this temper and attitude of mind have been greatly reinforced by the doubt, perplexity, and unsettlement of mind which have followed on the catastrophe of the World War. This titanic upheaval has bewildered men, and shaken their confidence in the future. If the marvellous resources of science are to be used to enhance the means of destruction, what is likely to be the future of civilisation ? In the face of recent experience the faith of the Victorian age in the moral value of education has received a rude shock, and in these days of wide-spread misery and disillusionment the old belief in progress has grown dim. Doubts arise in many minds, doubts whether there is really any divine purpose in this strange and eventful human history. An article with such a title as "The Decay of Europe" is at least suggestive.[1] And the much talked of book of Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlands*, a book which treats history as a record of diverse civilisations, each in its turn growing, then declining and vanishing away, is symptomatic of a changed outlook. One gathers a somewhat similar impression from Bury's recent work on "Progress." For him progress is a faith which lacks any sure foundation, though this faith dominated the seventies and eighties of last century. And he asks whether progress is not an idea which is relative to a particular stage of civilisation, "just as Providence, in its day, was an idea of relative

[1] Dr. Dillon, in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1925.

value, corresponding to a stage somewhat less advanced." [1]

In this anxious and troubled time, when venerable beliefs about man and his destiny are freely held up to question, it is a duty for those who hold to the religious view of things to reconsider the problem of history. Can we still maintain that history has a divine meaning? In the tangled complex of human affairs can we discern any plan, any deepening purpose, any scheme of development? In other words, does history exhibit any unity of reference and meaning? It may be hard to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, but the only way to deal with them is to consider, in the first instance, the kind of explanation which is possible in the historic field. On this much depends.

To begin with, I think we must reject the naturalistic interpretation of history, the theory, that is to say, which operates with the categories of natural science. Causal principles and laws, such as we apply to Nature, will not work in history, or at least only in a very restricted sense. Thus geographical and climatic conditions may account for some things, but they are powerless to explain concrete historical movements. As Simmel has pertinently urged, a material condition can only become a historic motive by becoming a psychical value.[2] The scientist rises from causal connections to laws which, once proved true, are always true.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 352.

[2] *Geschichtsphilosophie*, p. 166.

On this basis the astronomer can predict the beginning of an eclipse to a second, but in history there are no assured predictions. The reason is that in historical phenomena we are dealing with men not with things, and in the case of persons it is not natural causality which operates but the causality of freedom and self-determination. In other words, the moving elements are human wills, and they are not determined by external causes; they express themselves in motives; they select ends, follow after ideals, and live and move in a realm of values. The key to the understanding of history lies therefore in man's psychical nature rather than in his material environment. The inner life of man is essentially teleological; in other words, it is dominated by interest, it is appreciative of values, and it is of purpose devoted to the realisation of ends. And in the movements of history it is the action and interaction of human wills which count for most. Then there is a further consideration to be borne in mind. The human person is unique; he is identical with no other individual. This uniqueness is also shared by human events. No historical episode or movement is ever exactly repeated in the same precise setting of motives and circumstances. The man of science can make generalisations which he terms natural laws, such as the uniformity he calls the law of gravitation or the conservation of energy, and he never doubts that these principles will yield valid explanations in the future as they have done in the past. But in the shifting panorama of history the same situa-

tion never recurs, and there is, too, an incalculable element in the working of human wills. Under these conditions how, and in what sense, can there be historic explanation ? For, plainly, if historic explanation is excluded, a philosophic view of history is impossible.

Now, in the first place, it is apparent that though human individuals are unique, they have still a great deal in common. Man's physical, intellectual, and moral constitution is a universal fact which underlies all the diverse workings of human nature. We have a uniformity here, though it is not the unvarying uniformity of a natural law. But on the lower and more instinctive levels of man's psychical life the uniformity at least approaches that of a scientific law. Language is a psychical product, yet the comparative philologist is quite able to show that its evolution follows certain broad and well-defined principles. Something the same may be said of the development of social organisation and custom. But the uniformities are less marked when we enter the region of self-conscious and deliberative action, and notably so where personal interests, feelings, and passions are concerned. In this self-conscious sphere it is misleading to speak of laws, and I should agree with Sigwart and Stein that it is better to speak of tendencies.[1] That such tendencies are real and operative is implied by the fact that we can so far under-

[1] Sigwart, *Logic*, Vol. II., Eng. Trans., pp. 452 ff. Stein, *Gesetze, oder Tendenzen in der Geschichte*, Archiv. für Philosophie, Bd. XXXVI., 1924.

stand, interpret, and explain the conduct of individual men and of social groups ; and we do this by relating the particular to the universal. There is a continuity in human actings, otherwise any biography or history worthy of the name would be impossible. This connection is certainly not that of scientific causality, for historic continuity yields only the conception of tendency not the rigorous concept of scientific law. Nevertheless it represents a degree of uniformity which may be used for purposes of explanation. The important thing is to recognise how this continuity or connection is sustained. It is a fatally abstract and misleading idea to suppose that this link between past and present is merely due to the material environment in which human lives are set. As already suggested, the connection is psychical ; it lies in the living and conscious minds which carry within themselves the heritage and influences of the past into the present, and transform them into the interests and ideals which they seek to realise in the future.

But continuity is not a conception which can stand alone. If you find continuity either in the natural or psychical world there must be an identity or unity within which the process works and to which it is referred. Such a unity is of course given in the individual personality, and is presupposed in the interpretation of individual actions. But history is not " the essence of innumerable biographies," as Carlyle once said, nor can we understand historic movements by referring them

to independent individuals. The truth of course is, that personality, though unique, only develops its character through a social whole, and is never intelligible apart from this. Yet a social whole, however fully organised, is not itself a self-conscious mind and will, but none the less it is a medium within which psychical influences are constantly acting and reacting ; and the whole has a character of its own which is not identical with that of any individual in it, nor with the sum of the individuals taken separately. We cannot even say that this character is defined by striking an average of the individual constituents of the group. Consequently taking a group or society as a unique whole, we are so far able, by studying its special features, to understand the meaning of movements within it and their connection. These movements are interpreted as the expression of group-tendencies operating in the past and in the present. And in view of the fact that the immanent moving principles of the group are chiefly values which are the objects of will, historical explanation will take the form, not of scientific causation, but of appreciation. Appreciations, however, which serve to interpret one group cannot be applied without qualification to another, where the traditions, motives and interests are altogether different. Moreover, when we are dealing with a definite group our insight into the complex remains imperfect ; we can never fully appreciate all the connections, and there remains an incalculable element which cannot be rationalised. The defect of our

analysis is most patent in those regions where the feelings and personal interests play a large part; and even those who refuse to admit contingency here must at least confess ignorance.

If historical interpretation, as we have tried to show, requires a unity of reference, the problem arises how far this condition can be fulfilled. Nations, no doubt, exhibit a unity: they are unique wholes which can be interpreted on the foregoing lines; and we can even go further and find a unity of interest and purpose in a group of nations which form an interacting whole, and have developed a common culture. One might try under these conditions to interpret and find a general meaning in the interrelated movements which fall within the whole we call European civilisation. But if we extend our vision over a wider area, the unity becomes too vague to carry much meaning within it; and when we regard mankind as a whole the task of interpretation baffles us. It is true, indeed, that there is a unity in human nature, but the scattered peoples and civilisations of the globe do not form such a system of interacting purposes and tendencies that we can interpret them as moving elements within one significant process. The civilisation of India, China, and Europe cannot be embraced in one human history within which we trace a common meaning and purpose. This is a task which those who have written philosophies of history have never really attempted, and in practice they have confined themselves to Europe. On this point Troeltsch is justified when

he says, that mankind as a whole is not a historical unity and so has no unitary development.[1] Those will be least inclined to dispute this who have tried to find some single organising idea or end which casts light on the movements both of Eastern and Western civilisation.

If, then, we cannot take mankind as a unity which can be the object of historical interpretation, it would seem that we must limit ourselves to such a unity as exists in Western civilisation, for here the elements are more or less interdependent and interact with one another. And the question arises whether, within this whole as it extends back into the past, we can detect some movement towards an end, some tendency which can be called progress. Here let me say in passing, that while the idea of progress may be properly criticised, it ought not to be denied on merely metaphysical grounds. Reality, we are sometimes told, must be timeless and eternal, and so development in time can only be an unreal appearance. Without entering into metaphysics, it is, perhaps, enough to say that the theory should be rejected, for if it were true all historic values would lose their meaning, and there would be no end after which to strive.[2]

If we reject this view as more or less in conflict

[1] *Historismus*, p. 706. Prof. Pringle Pattison takes the same view in his Hertz lecture on the "Phil. of History."

[2] Croce, it may be noted, breaks with Hegelianism on this point, and posits an infinite progress in time such that the end is perfectly realised at every stage. But Croce's purely immanental idealism admits of no movement towards an end unrealised, and is not consistent with a religious view of history.

with the practical attitude to history, we may go on to ask if, under the limitations already assigned, it is possible to regard our history as a continuous movement to a goal in the future. In other words, can we detect within it the presence of that which we commonly term progress ? When, however, we ask ourselves what the question precisely means, our difficulties begin. Progress is a value-idea, and therefore implies a standard of value. In this case, what standard do you propose to take ? Suppose you have settled this, we have still to ask : Is the test you decide to adopt one that can be successfully applied in the concrete ? If you say that happiness is the norm, you are at once involved in all the difficulties and absurdities of the hedonistic calculus. There is really no assured means of judging whether the net amount of happiness at one stage of culture is greater than at another. It is a fallacy to suppose that if we should have been unhappy under the conditions of an older time the men of the period must have had the same feelings. Savagery seems miserable to the civilised man, but the savage in his turn thinks a civilised life is wretched and prefers his own condition. Nor are we better served by the use of such conceptions as " social well-being " or " increase of life," for human appreciation or valuation of these ideas is vague and shifting. No doubt there are certain aspects of culture which we may consider in isolation, and say that, in any ordinary use of the term, they seem to exhibit progress. For instance, the amount of scientific knowledge at the disposal of

society to-day is far greater than in the past, and it grows steadily and rapidly. But it does not follow that society as a whole is advancing. After all, the scientific knowledge of an age is only understood and possessed by a very few; and in our days, when scientific inventions are so freely used to promote the comfort and amusement of men and women, it seems probable that the result is to make people unsettled and superficial. If life becomes more varied and outwardly attractive, this is at least a doubtful gain to set over against loss of depth, concentration and earnestness. Ingenuity in exploiting the forces of Nature does not necessarily make society better. Hence it becomes very difficult to say that advance on particular lines within a social system means an advance in the society as a whole, which is reflected in the lives of all the members. But if there is to be progress in any full sense this is surely implied.

It is obvious, then, that if we are to make any headway with this problem of progress, we need some more adequate standard by which to judge it. In this difficulty the only way open to us is to take the idea of good, an idea so far realised, to be an ultimate idea, an idea, that is to say, not translatable into terms other than itself, and to conceive its complete realisation to be the ideal. From the formal point of view this would mean the actualisation of all man's capacities for good in and through a perfected society, the good of the system being reflected in all its members, and each member harmoniously contributing to the good of all. But, as

Green more than a generation ago pointed out, the ideal good remains so far formal, though we may have faith that with the process of history it will gradually gain in meaning and content. As it stands, however, it is far from easy to see how this ideal can be consistently used as a test of progress. This at once appears if you try to apply the ideal to decide finally whether a particular historic movement is on the line of progress or not. For instance, we may say that the Reformation was a great forward step in the line of the good, but every Catholic judges otherwise. That is to say, a formal ideal, though accepted, does not ensure consistent judgments as to whether specific historic phenomena are evidence of progress or deterioration. And even a movement which, *prima facie*, appears evil, will be interpreted by some as a means to progress in virtue of the reaction which it calls forth. At this point the optimist readily involves himself in a vicious circle. Convinced that the historic process as a whole is progressive, he insists that specific movements must in the end be in the line of progress, for they are involved in the forward march of the whole. When the validity of the original assumption is challenged, and he is pressed to justify it, he strives to show that particular stages of history are better than the stages which preceded them, and so deduces progress in the whole. But it is bad logic to argue that there is progress in the whole because there is progress in the parts, and that there must be progress in the parts because there is progress in the whole. The

difficulty is not to be resolved in this fashion ; and here I am inclined to agree with Troeltsch, that the effort to establish relation between the final end or ultimate value and historic phenomena can only be an individual synthesis, a synthesis, I may add, which really rests on an act of faith.[1]

This complicated discussion may be of use if it has served to show that there is no convincing argument to prove that progress is necessary, and that it is a divine law of history. We do not even know that mundane conditions will subserve a development of mankind in the far-off future, and from the scientific point of view it is improbable. The earth, as seems likely, has sustained forms of human life for two or three hundred thousand years, but there is no guarantee that it will do so indefinitely. If the physical conditions of life became more and more unfavourable, this would inevitably react on human civilisation. But apart from external considerations, the facts themselves belie the idea that there is an immanent principle of development inherent in human society. For how does what we commonly call progress come about ? The moving elements of human life, we have seen, are values which are ends to human wills ; and their realisation depends on the free choice of persons. Man is under no invincible necessity of realising them. He chooses them or fails to choose them, and consequently the word progress, if it means anything, means a human task or vocation, something we ought to achieve, but may not achieve. When

[1] *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. II., p. 712.

men and women freely fulfil their vocation, society will advance, when they ignore it, society will deteriorate; and, in history, there are periods both of progress and deterioration. The dependence of society on the personal life is seen clearly when we mark how movements which we judge to be advances are actually brought about. They have their beginnings in the minds of individuals, they issue from the will and acts of persons who feel more deeply and see further than their fellows, elect spirits

> Standing apart
> Upon the forehead of the age to come.

If the need of the time does not find expression in leaders and prophets who bring with them the gift of personal vision and energy, the forward step will not be taken. Nor can we doubt that there are days when the call for a seer is heard in the land, but there is no response.

The point I am striving to make is, that personality is fundamental in the social and historic sphere. No doubt the individual will come to nothing apart from the social heritage into which he enters and the social medium through which he brings his powers to fruition. None the less the good in a social system is only real in personal lives, for society is not a person, nor, in itself, the sustainer of values. Personality is a deeper and richer category than the subpersonal, and if we are to find a meaning and end in history, it must somehow be found in the personal sphere. It is only a loose way of speaking to say that history is the

education of humanity, for humanity has neither the unity nor the personal character which give significance to the idea of education. The ultimate *raison d'être* of social development is, that it will subserve higher personal development. Some further considerations will perhaps lend additional justification to this plea.

If you say that the ultimate good or ideal, so far as it can be defined formally, is the actual goal in which the historic process will reach its consummation, then you will find yourself confronted with certain grave difficulties. For one thing, you commit yourself to the idea that the mundane Utopia of the future is to be the privilege and possession of the few who come on the scene late in time. Countless generations will have suffered, toiled, and vanished, without having inherited the promises or even having seen them afar off. In other words, the mass of mankind are fated to be used as a mere means. There is the further objection that an ideal state of static perfection cannot be consistently envisaged as a good for men constituted as they are. The higher life in mankind always rests on a tension between the *ought* and the *is*, and this tension is the constant stimulus to development. Remove this tension, suppose the actual to coalesce with the ideal, then the very form and fashion of human life has passed away, and existence in this world will have become "flat, stale, and unprofitable." Static perfection would be mere weariness. Or, to put the matter from a slightly different point of view, man's moral

and spiritual life implies a conflict with evil. Moral evil is real, and not simply good in the making; but it exists to be overcome, and only in overcoming it do we develop our spiritual powers. The form of the higher life is a conflict, and a conflict it will remain. Evil, as Lotze once said, will not vanish; and the aged Goethe, in a conversation with Eckermann, remarked: "Let humanity last as long as it will, there will always be hindrances in its way, and all kinds of distress to make it develop its powers." All this, it seems to me, cannot be disputed, and if so, any attempt to define the historic goal as a complete mundane good is entangled in hopeless inconsistencies.

The results we have reached will seem to many largely negative. But this is due to the fact that we have had to clear away assumptions with regard to history which are not really tenable. If any one, ignoring the difficulties of historic explanation to which attention has been drawn, still thinks that a philosophy of history is possible, I invite him to consider this further difficulty. To philosophise adequately you must have the relevant facts before you; and history is a movement of which you only know an insignificant part, and that imperfectly. To interpret fully the third act of a drama, when you are ignorant of the first and the last, is not practicable.

On the other hand, if we keep in mind certain things which have been emphasised in this paper, we shall see that history is susceptible of a religious interpretation. In one of his letters Keats said of

this world, that it was " the vale of soul-making," and we may say of history that it is the medium of personal development. History does not reach its goal through any mere extension in time : it is always fulfilling its meaning through the emergence of spiritual personalities. For every value that is immanent in it comes to a focus and living expression in persons, and development is defined in terms of personal lives. From this standpoint, then, we might say that history is the divine medium for the making of souls. Yet we cannot say that in the actual historic process this divine end is perfectly realised. For human personality is, and ever will remain, fragmentary and incomplete, and this has its counterpart in a social order which is always imperfect. Mere analysis of the data will not carry us further than this : any more comprehensive synthesis must rest on postulates of religious faith. Let me indicate in my closing sentences what these postulates seem to be.

This broken and unsatisfying earthly history cannot be the complete truth : it points beyond itself and has its issue and goal in the transcendent world. If the absolute and complete good is to be real—and it must be real if we are to be saved from the hopeless tangle of relativism—then it lies beyond the present world-order in the supramundane sphere. It is not *here* but *yonder* as an old thinker loved to put it. The postulate of the transcendent is not a gratuitous hypothesis, for it enables us to find the elements of a moral and spiritual order in this broken and often baffling

human experience. This postulate carries with it a faith in immortality of some form, and if human souls are heirs of immortality we trace, albeit dimly, the outlines of a larger spiritual cosmos. There rises before us the idea of an ever-present kingdom of the spirit, a kingdom in which every upward-striving spirit comes to its completion, and the early and the late actors in the human play in the end enjoy the same spiritual heritage. So every point in history is charged with a religious meaning, for it is a portal to the transcendent world. This synthesis, I freely admit, rests on faith. Yet from a spiritual point of view it justifies itself, if it gives a deeper and more satisfying meaning to our experience. That it has difficulties I do not deny. But the difficulties are less than if we suppose this mundane history to form a complete drama which has no issue beyond itself.

V

THE THEOLOGICAL ANTITHESIS OF GRACE AND FREEDOM

THE contrast of Grace and Freedom, passing as it has sometimes done into a sharp antagonism, has had an important influence on theological thought. It has entered deeply into the development of Christian doctrine, and has raised profound and far-reaching issues. And this is intelligible, for the question is really the fundamental problem of the relation of the divine to the human factor in the process of salvation. From Paul, through Augustine to Luther and Calvin, we can trace the evolution of the antithesis. In Calvin the contrast is worked out to a clear-cut and rigorous conclusion which establishes the exclusive efficiency of grace and leaves no real place for human freedom. Of course no one, not even Calvin, would deny that man exercises choice: he is obviously not a mere automaton; but this admission is quite consistent with a thorough-going determinism, since choice itself may be determined. Hence it is quite possible to retain the form of freedom when the substance has vanished. But while we can appreciate the psychological and logical motives which have contributed to a religious determinism, it is none the less evident that the Calvinistic theology—a theology

embodied in the Westminster Confession—presents very grave difficulties to the modern mind. Especially so because no room for freedom is left, and yet man is treated as in some sense responsible for his salvation. A system, however logically developed from certain premises, is bound to raise doubt and provoke reaction, if the consequences drawn from it run counter to accepted facts of human experience.

My object in this paper is to trace briefly the historical development of the antithesis of grace and freedom, to point out what freedom really implies, and to suggest how far the ecclesiastical doctrine on this whole subject requires modification. For it seems to me that to suggest, as some incline to do, that we have here an ultimate antinomy which transcends solution by man is no way out of the difficulty. At all events, ere we adopt this conclusion, let us consider whether the contradiction is not of our own making.

The antithesis in question is not present at all in the teaching of Jesus. He does not speak of grace as such, but of salvation. His words convey a perfect certainty of God and a full assurance that God forgives the penitent sinner. The consciousness of divine forgiveness brings life and joy to man. Jesus always assumes the fact of human freedom. Salvation is indeed the fruit of faith, but Christ's call for faith implies that it lies with the individual to give or to withhold his faith.

It is when we come to St. Paul that the contrast of grace and freedom begins to emerge. For, as you are aware, the antithesis of the free and spiri-

tual man, regenerated by grace, and the carnal or natural man, under servitude to sin, fills a large place in the Pauline theology. Through the apostle this doctrine gained a dominating influence over Christian thought. Paul's notion of grace was not his solution of an abstract problem : it had its roots deep in his intense inner life. In his own person he had undergone a great and transforming experience ; and when he looked back and reflected on that experience he felt that the deliverance had come from God, not through any endeavour of his own. " By the grace of God," he tells us, " I am what I am." The vain aspirations and futile struggles of the years when he lived a Pharisee were now only a mournful memory. The apostle was conscious that he had been inwardly renewed, and what aforetime had been impossible had become possible. Whence this change ? It was wholly due to the grace of God who had called him, and who had revealed His Son in him. The unrighteousness of the natural and unregenerate man had been replaced by a righteousness of God, a righteousness not of works but of faith, and freely given. The essential point is that Paul traced this spiritual deliverance to a divine source, for that righteousness could not come from the law he was perfectly sure. His personal experience of salvation the apostle universalised, giving it a theological interpretation ; and here he uses the ideas of the First Adam and the Fall, the Second Adam or Christ, and renewal through faith in him. As a consequence of the Fall and the reign of sin that

ensued from it, man became impotent to will the good. Only through the grace of God, manifested in the death of Christ and appropriated by faith, could man be delivered from his ignoble bondage. Though faith is not resolved into grace, grace is the efficient cause of salvation. For man cannot win deliverance for himself.

Paul does not explicitly define the relation of grace to freedom, yet we can infer what his position was. He does not say that in consequence of the Fall man totally lost his freedom, but he certainly maintains that his freedom was restricted thereby. The natural man was no longer capable of willing what was good, and ere he could become good the action of grace was necessary. This complete dependence on grace leads Paul to his doctrine of predestination according to which those who receive grace are the called of God. Yet the apostle does not think of predestination as an unconditional act, and he would not have termed it "an act of God's mere good pleasure." He was not therefore led to assert an absolute antagonism between grace and freedom.

In Augustine we find a further development of the Pauline doctrine of grace, and especially so in relation to the sacraments of the church. With the saint as with the apostle the religious doctrine stands in close relation to psychological experience. In his pre-conversion days Augustine had battled with great seas which threatened to overwhelm him, and only after a long struggle had he felt his feet resting on the firm ground. The conflicts and

the despairing endeavours of that early time left an indelible mark on his soul ; and when he looked back on them from the secure ground of Christian faith, he was convinced of the impotence of the natural man to do any good thing. Here the parallel with Paul is striking, but the church father drew out with a more relentless hand the implications of the human situation.

Augustine did not set out from the *liberum arbitrium*, the freedom of choice. His starting-point is God and the soul, and he proceeds to universalise his own experience. In the light of that experience he felt sure that unregenerate humanity could not will the good, though he did not teach the total depravity of human nature as a dogma. Curiously Augustine did not think of sin as something positive. Thus he asks : *quid est aliud quod malum dicitur quam privatio boni ?* Darkness is due to lack of light, and the absence of good has proved the undoing of man. Yet this is a false position ; for sin is a matter of will, and to will the evil is just as positive as to will the good.

Where, then, does Augustine stand on the question of freedom ? At one time he held fallen man was free to appropriate divine grace, but this view he afterwards rejected and termed a dangerous error. Adam, on the other hand, was free to accept the divine aid, but he had no power to will the good without the divine *adjutorium*. But this is a contradiction, for it really means that man has and has not the capacity to will the good. Nevertheless the problem of freedom exercised the mind of

Augustine, and it is clear that he refused to commit himself to determinism. Man, he agreed, has the power to determine himself, but he believed the scope and operation of this power had been restricted by the fact of sin. Man was verily in bondage to sin, so that he could not will the good ; and yet he did not suppose that the will was at every point rigidly determined. For even the sinner could exercise choice, and might select and follow one alternative rather than another. If we speak accurately, then, his doctrine limited freedom but did not entirely abolish it.

None the less we conclude that the limitation of freewill by Augustine is serious. Man is not free to do good if he chooses, because he is dominated by lust and passion and his purpose is feeble. He cannot save himself : only God can save him ; and God, in virtue of His foreknowledge, has predestined a certain number to salvation. And yet Augustine believes that predestination does not annul freedom, and he remarks that a passage in Romans (ix. 11) should not be interpreted as doing so. He tells us that it belongs to the human will to assent to or to reject the divine call : *nostrum enim est credere et velle.* Despite this Augustine clings to the idea that salvation is absolutely due to God. He cannot bring himself to abandon this principle, and so he qualifies his former statement by construing it to mean that God produces in man the will to believe. Obviously, therefore, faith, though an act of the will, is an act which is really initiated by God. The doctrine of acceptance or rejection

by man thus loses its meaning, and the theory that grace alone gives blessedness implies that faith is virtually merged in the action of grace. There is no room for a will that assents or refuses, and grace is and must be irresistible. To this conclusion Augustine appears to have come even before the Pelagian controversy: it was his considered opinion that with grace man could not co-operate. There is consequently no place for freedom in the scheme of salvation: it is grace descending from above which transforms the will of the individual.

In the end, then, Augustine, while conceding to the natural man a degree of freedom, in the sense at least that he can choose between evils, so formulates his doctrine of salvation that grace supersedes freedom. He has not shown how these discordant elements can be harmonised. From a psychological standpoint his theory is intelligible: the motives and influences in his mind which went to fashion it are apparent. But so long as he held to man's responsibility for his salvation his theology remains logically incoherent.

It would take us too far afield to examine the theory of grace in the mediæval period, and I shall only say a word on the position of Thomas Aquinas. With Thomas, as with the Schoolmen, *gratia infusa* was essential to salvation, and he rejected semi-Pelagianism. But the antithesis of grace and freedom is overcome by a doctrine of self-determination which is at root determinism. For God moves all things in Nature, and He also moves human wills. To be moved voluntarily just means to be

moved by oneself. But this self-movement on the part of the individual may be due to initiation from without ; and so to be moved by himself does not conflict with the fact that in a more ultimate sense he is moved by God. And if God wills that the heart He moves shall receive grace, that heart infallibly receives it. The self-determination of Thomas is thus a form of freedom which is consistent with predestination, and the universal working of God forms its mysterious background. The solution will only commend itself to those who accept determinism. But the view of Thomas made it possible to refer certain things to man as self-determining in the first instance, while in the end submerging all human activity in the divine Causality, as the ultimate source of all being and energy.

When we come to Luther we find that he is greatly influenced by Paul and Augustine, and like them, too, his doctrine is coloured by a deep personal experience. Luther never doubted that he was faithful to the Pauline teaching on grace, and grace he regards as the starting-point of his own religious thinking. Of the corruption of the natural man consequent on the Fall, he was absolutely convinced : nothing save grace could deliver sinful humanity. On the freedom of the will he agrees with Augustine. He did not deny the self-determination of the natural man, but declared that he was only free to do evil. *Dum facit quod in se est peccat mortaliter.* In all that concerns the good freewill is an empty name to which no reality corresponds. Only the grace of the God who is mani-

fest in Christ can lift man out of his hopeless servitude. It is true that Luther emphasised, in a way which Augustine did not do, the function of faith. As we all know he described justification by faith as the "article of a standing or falling church." Faith for him is a living and active thing: it is no frigid assent but a movement of the whole self whereby man casts himself on the forgiving love of the God revealed in Christ. But though Luther depicts this faith in words which clearly suggest an act of freedom on man's part, he could not without inconsistency define it as such. For unregenerate man is totally incapable of willing what is good. So he speaks of faith as a direct gift of God, a work of God in the soul. In keeping with this Luther accepts, though he does not exaggerate, the principle of predestination. For him, as Troeltsch says, predestination was an expression for the miracle wrought by faith in guilty man who could not save himself. It was the divine work and part of the divine purpose.

Luther found it hard to reconcile himself to the fewness of the saved: he had neither the stern temper nor the unbending logic of Calvin. Those elements in Augustine which were in the background with Luther were firmly seized and rigorously developed by Calvin; and he brings the Lutheran conception of salvation into the service of his fundamental idea of the sovereignty of God. All events in Nature and human life conspire to work out the divine will, and no place is left for the free agency of man. Calvinism, it has been

said, has its roots in the *servum arbitrium:* hence there is no true antithesis between grace and freedom which calls for reconciliation. For Calvin Adam's sin was willed by God as well as all the evil and suffering which flowed from that sin. Religion is narrowed down to destination to participate in the divine will, and the conclusion is logically drawn that predestination is absolute. It is therefore both positive and negative, predestination to eternal life and also to eternal death. In Calvin's theology Reprobation stands out with a clearness which is not matched in the work of any of his predecessors.

The conclusions drawn by Calvin with such rigorous logic raise moral issues of which he himself did not appear to be conscious. As we have already noted, the problem of reconciling grace with freedom is no longer a problem for Calvinism. Man chooses, no doubt, but there is no real liberty in human action, for the only effective will in the universe is the sovereign will of God. We cannot refrain from asking whether a system developed on these lines does not empty religion of spiritual content and value. For ourselves the question is a very relevant one, for Calvinism has entered deeply into the theology of the Reformed Churches, and is well represented in the Westminster Confession.

So far our brief historical survey has not suggested a clue how grace and freedom are to be harmonised. To sacrifice one to the other is to cut the knot, not to untie it. Plainly the consciousness of freedom is not to be explained away, and

man will not readily acquiesce in the idea that he is merely a passive instrument of the divine will. Hence while religious people cling to the fact of divine grace, they also feel that they cannot abandon freedom, and that in the interests of religion itself. In this dilemma the suggestion is sometimes made that the antithesis is one which the finite mind cannot transcend. Unification is not possible: all we can do is to take the two points of view alternately, thus doing justice to each in turn.[1] Now I began my paper by saying this was no way out of the difficulty. True, there may be contradictions in human experience which our reason cannot fully solve, but before we accept an ultimate contradiction we ought carefully to consider whether it is inevitable. We should at least ask whether the trouble may not lie in the way of stating the problem; and, if so, we ought to enquire whether it may not be restated in a form which will render it less intractable.

Here it may be profitable to glance at Kant's treatment of the matter in his *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*. Kant approaches the subject with a profound conviction that the autonomy of the will is the fundamental presupposition of all ethical action. To his mind the notion of irresistible grace is an ethical contradiction: it is really non-moral. No passively received experi-

[1] This, for instance, is the attitude of Seeberg. He remarks that God must be all operative, and at the same time man must be free. We ought to hold to both principles, whether they can be harmonised or not. *Fundamental Truths of the Christian Religion*, p. 160.

ence can supersede the moral activity of the will in making man good. So-called means of grace can have no inherent efficacy, and Kant suggests we should rather regard them as means whereby we may influence ourselves through the idea of God. Now psychological insight into the working of the religious spirit was not one of Kant's merits, and in many respects he was a man of the eighteenth century. The spiritual experience of men like Paul and Augustine was foreign to him, and he found it easy to sacrifice grace in the interests of ethical freedom.

A more notable attempt was made to resolve the antithesis under the influence of the speculative idealism which grew out of the work of Kant. The writers to whom I refer have so far followed the Hegelian method of seeking to trace back differences to a deeper unity. You will find more or less true illustrations of this method in the works on *Dogmatik*, by the German theologians Lipsius and Biedermann, as well as in the more recent English books of Professor Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, and of Mr. Collingwood, *Philosophy and Religion*. It would occupy too much time to examine these works in detail, and I can only try to summarise the argument as I understand it.

Grace and freedom ought not to be absolutely opposed: they are, in fact, complementary ideas and exist for one another. Freedom is not indeterminism: it does not mean arbitrary choice nor does it imply contingency or open alternatives. On the contrary, it is self-determination, which is the

expression of character. Freedom so conceived is just the capacity for receiving grace as its complement and completion. God working in man, and man seeking after God, are not two diverse and unrelated processes: they are rather distinguishable aspects of a deeper unity, the unity of the finite spirit and the Absolute Spirit. In the ecclesiastical doctrine of grace there is, we are told, an element of externality. Hence, as Biedermann puts it, the failure to recognise that "every rise of the rational self to the freedom of the spirit is, at the same time, an activity of divine grace within it."[1] In other words, the operation of the Spirit regarded from the divine side as grace is from the human side the progressive realisation of man's spiritual freedom. The two are distinguishable but inseparable aspects of the one process. Biedermann speaks of faith and repentance as acts of the human ego, but in a sense they are also acts of God. Indeed, Mr. Collingwood, in the work mentioned, says frankly that, by fusing the human and divine factors we can speak of God's punishment of man as man's self-punishment, and man's repentance as also God's repentance.

In criticising this theory it is hardly necessary to insist that this merging of the human and divine in a metaphysical unity is not really compatible with an ethical and spiritual relationship between man and God. There is a danger in unifying over much, and in this instance a synthesis is effected at the expense of the spiritual value of religion. The

[1] *Dogmatik*, ed. 1869, p. 711.

vital point in question is the conception of freedom which is essential to the religious relation. Is faith an act of freedom, a venture of the spirit, for which man himself is primarily responsible ? The speculative solution treats man's self-determination to the good as likewise the actualisation of God's will in man ; hence to regard it as primarily man's act is and must be a one-sided and inadequate view. It seems to me this solution is not more satisfactory than that of Augustine and Luther, who refer all good to God and all evil to the indwelling sin of mankind. Hence to speak of responsibility for salvation becomes meaningless, for the result is due to the operation of elements which the individual is powerless to control or modify. And I fail to see that the speculative solution leaves any more room for responsibility than the theological, or that freedom on the former view can mean more than the actualisation of human powers and capacities by the instrumentality of the Divine Spirit. This is substantially the conception of Thomas Aquinas, who says man's self-determination is also his determination by God.

The issue which has now to be faced is, whether self-determination is a conception which fully interprets and does justice to our meaning when we say that man is a free agent. From one point of view the principle of self-determination seems a proper note of free as opposed to constrained action. Natural objects do not determine themselves but are determined by forces acting on them : man, on the contrary, does not act in this mechanical

fashion, but self-consciously directs his own action. The essential point is, What is the nature of this inward freedom ? That man chooses is certain, and that the scope of his choice is restricted is also certain. You may choose to sit at the fire or to walk abroad, but you cannot by willing float in the air or stop the circulation of your blood. Within limits, then, there is choice, but is the choice perfectly indifferent ? Here extreme indeterminists make the mistake of separating entirely the self from its motives, and of claiming that the self is able to identify itself with any and every motive. It is easy to see that this is flatly contradicted by experience : if decent people felt as free to lie as to tell the truth social confidence would be destroyed. Motives are always qualified by character, and if volition is not an expression of character it cannot carry moral meaning and responsibility with it. In other words, motives, as has been said " are the subject moving or tending to move." Determinism, on the other hand, in so far as it regards motives as external to the will and endowed with an efficiency of their own, misconstrues the function of deliberation, and it is also unable to explain responsibility. The crucial point is, whether, within limits, choice is open, and a man could have ever acted otherwise than he did. A great many who accept the principle of self-determination deny that such open possibilities exist. The concrete self which carries character with it in willing, it is argued, always expresses the one course which is consistent with character, and no other

course was really possible. It seems to me that this theory makes character a kind of dead-weight which rigidly determines the line of action throughout ; and if we demur to this we are told that freedom is not impaired, for character is just the developed self. The man always determines himself, what more do you want ? In reply, one would urge that this theory leaves no room for a real initiative on the part of the self, such as is implied in that reaction of the self against existing character which issues in a break with the past and a reformation of life. Nor does the total exclusion of open alternatives in choice allow of a convincing psychological explanation of facts like remorse and repentance. It is not enough to say that when you repent you are sorry that you were the man you were when you did the deed. You mean this no doubt, but you also mean that you might have acted differently and did not do so.

The stress of the difficulty is seen in the fact that exponents of this kind of self-determinism are sometimes led to make admissions, admissions which, if fairly examined, ought to carry them beyond the limits of their theory. Consider, for example, the critical case of the recognition of moral obligation. Does this act of recognising or of refusing to recognise not imply the presentation of a real alternative to the will ? In one able exposition of the argument for self-determination as a *via media* between Determinism and Indeterminism the writer concludes, that this act of recognition comes solely from within, and man has

it in him to accept the obligation or to reject it.[1] In other words, a real alternative is presented here, and if here, why not elsewhere ? The theologian has to face a like test in the matter of faith. Is the call to faith a call to which a man may respond or fail to respond ? If we deny that faith is an act of freedom, a decision when the self deals with an open alternative, then like Augustine and Luther we may merge faith in irresistible grace. But to do so is to divest man of any personal responsibility for his salvation.

To my mind the fallacy in the view I have been examining lies in the complete identification of the self with the character which has been developed. Character is not to be construed as a definite magnitude which produces a determinate effect in strict accordance with each situation upon which it reacts. It is something plastic and growing, and is susceptible of constant modification from within through the initiative of the active self or subject. The factor of spontaneity which biologists are coming to admit is present in organic evolution is more conspicuously operative in spiritual development. This spontaneity is revealed in the way in which the self as will modifies character, strengthening, it may be, one aspect, and suppressing or controlling another aspect. To think of character as a consolidated whole inevitably bringing about these results is absurd. To say that the self as concrete always expresses a man's whole character, in other words, his complete system of habits and tenden-

[1] H. Siebeck, *Religionsphilosophie*, p. 397.

cies, is inadmissible. For if reformation of character is a fact, it follows that the self cannot be so bound up with character as already developed that it cannot have an open choice between aspects of its character, electing to express certain aspects and refusing to express other aspects. We know that character in finite individuals is never entirely consistent, and a human personality embraces within itself conflicting tendencies and unharmonised desires. The tension between these disparate elements is not intrinsic to them : it is due to the fact that they are organically related to the active self which owns them. And so long as human personality is imperfectly unified, the self which expresses itself in specific acts is not bound down to a single course of action. A man's environment and character stand for a situation in which the total possibilities are definite and restricted. But as he faces the future, within these limited possibilities choice is open, and he may realise or fail to realise the good which is in him. That conduct bears a general relation to character is not denied : all we assert is that character, taken at a given point in its development, is not such a coherent and unified whole that one, and only one, line of action issues from it. Character contains various possibilities within it, and these are sometimes presented to the self as real alternatives. In other words, contingency plays a part, though a restricted part, in human action. Nor do I see how this element of contingency can be eliminated.

I am quite aware that this limited indeterminism will not commend itself to many philosophers and to some theologians. It will be objected that, while action on this view has a relation to character, the relation is not determinate, and in the act of choosing the self seems to stand outside its own content. The self is at least detached from its character to this extent, that it exercises a free choice between motives which express different aspects of character. But this, it will be said, is not the self which really chooses, for that is always the self which is qualified by and continuous with its character as a whole. The objection may be put in a slightly different form. Every developed self is a system of qualities, and it only exists and recognises itself in these qualities. A self in any way apart from this systematic content is a metaphysical and moral abstraction. Hence in every act of preference its formed character is expressed.

The problem is no doubt a difficult one. And if you maintain that continuity is an all-pervasive principle, holding alike in the sphere of mind and of life, then there is no escape from the conclusion that contingency is an illusion. But the standpoint of experience is not quite the same as that of reflection, and the one should not be confused with the other. We want to rationalise our experience so far as we can, and when we reflect upon it we try to find continuity between its data. Still the demand for continuity is no pledge that discontinuities are unreal, and the will to rationalise carries with it no assurance that we shall not en-

counter elements which cannot be rationalised. That is to say, a scientific method may have great general value, though at points it meets with phenomena which are intractable. This truth is now being forced on our notice. So the existence of breaks or discontinuities in organic evolution is widely accepted, and emergent qualities not explained by pre-existing qualities are taken as data of experience. If discontinuity is admitted in biology, there is no ground why it should be rejected in psychology.

The plea for strict continuity or determinism in the mental sphere suffers, it seems to me, from the failure to make a necessary distinction. For one must bear in mind that the self as subject has to be distinguished from the self as object, the self that wills from the self on which we reflect. When we contemplate the self as object we take it along with its content as a whole, for, apart from this content, the ego when contemplated appears to be elusive and unreal. On the other hand, the self about which we reflect, and whose content we ideally construct, is not the self that we immediately experience, it is not the self which is directly present and active in the very process of reflection and construction. Now the self as subject, immediately experienced or "enjoyed," to use Professor Alexander's term, carries with it in its acting the sense of spontaneity and freedom, and we do not seem entitled to conclude that this fundamental ego, presupposed in every act of reflection, is determined at every point by the self retrospectively

regarded as a system of qualities. The two points of view cannot be made to coalesce. But you ignore this if you take the standpoint of reflection as the only valid one, and so infer that the principle of continuity or rational connection ought rigidly to be maintained.

The theory I am criticising would be justified if it could be shown that the fundamental ego, the self in immediate experience, can be reduced to the unified whole of its associated qualities. But there are serious difficulties in the way of this reduction. For the active self organises and owns its qualities, and gives varying expression to them in its acting. It may, indeed, be said that the self is just the expression of a new kind of relatedness between the elements involved already in the structure of mental process : it is a unique " emergent quality." But here, though we are invited to accept the issue as a fact, it is not pretended that the elements presupposed, either taken singly or as a whole, explain the issue. The absence of explanation points to a problem. If the self-conscious ego is not to be regarded as the continuous development and resultant product of lower forms of experience, it follows that the principle of continuity does not strictly hold here. The ego no doubt supervenes on a basis of mental development already attained : it implies this basis and it uses it for further development. But it appears as a fresh constitutive and organising principle, and it makes an entirely new range of psychical evolution possible. The characteristic mental development of man is at every

point conditioned by the presence and activity of the self. To call this merely the expression of a new kind of relatedness between the elements of the previous basis is meaningless ; for the essential fact is more than a new relatedness : it is a new *relating* activity dependent on a subject. We are confronted with a discontinuity. But we must accept the advent of self-consciousness as a fact of paramount significance, and the constitutive function which the self exercises implies a certain independence. If the fundamental self have this unique character it may well be endowed with a real freedom, a freedom in which possibilities are not foreclosed by what has gone before. We shall only suppose open possibilities in conduct are a myth if we persist in identifying the self which chooses with the self on which we reflect, with the self which has no reality apart from the content it has developed.

The view I have been criticising appears to me to erect character into a kind of fate which so prescribes the series of human acts that at no crisis in his career could a man truthfully say, " I might have acted otherwise." After all, one of the tests of experience lies in the ventures which have to be made and the risks which have to be run, in the possibilities of moral failure and of moral victory which life sets before us. And if freedom in the sense indicated seems necessary to the reality and responsibility of the moral life, we are justified in accepting it, though in the nature of the case we cannot fully rationalise it. For to rationalise is to

establish a logical continuity between the elements which are present in a given situation, and a world in which contingency plays a real though a subordinate *rôle* is a world which cannot be perfectly rationalised. This is the old question of science and miracle in another form. The purely scientific theory of causal connection leaves no place for the miraculous in its scheme of the natural order. But this does not necessarily prove that there can be no such thing as miracle : the truth may be that the scientific scheme of Nature is abstract and inadequate. For we may well hold that there is more in Nature than can be grasped by the scientific understanding.

If we accept the fact of human freedom in the sense explained, we have to show how it is related to the conception of grace. Obviously, if we are loyal to the facts of religious experience, we cannot sacrifice grace to freedom in the way that Kant, for instance, proposed to do. On the other hand, the notion of irresistible grace must be frankly abandoned, if freedom is to be conserved. To my mind the notion is non-moral, and therefore not truly religious. For though grace may influence the will, it cannot supersede it if ethical responsibility is to remain. Plainly, then, we must come to some understanding about the scope and function of grace.

Here, it seems to me, it is necessary to modify and in some degree to refashion the ecclesiastical doctrine of grace. The conception of saving grace cannot simply, on the ground of certain psycholo-

gical experiences, be made an independent principle which is the sole condition of moral and spiritual goodness. It is no longer practicable to say with Augustine that the virtues of the heathen are only *splendida vitia*, and that there is no goodness outside Christian salvation. The doctrine of grace must be related to the supreme idea of God as well as to the objective good or divine end of man. The good or ideal should be conceived to be the full realisation of man's spiritual nature in a spiritual society of redeemed souls or kingdom of God. That this ideal is best achieved through the Christian Church is true, but this truth should not blind us to the fact that elements of moral and spiritual good, as well as saving influences, are present in the wider sphere of human society: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." That the church is the exclusive repository of the means of grace was a doctrine which once dominated Europe; but it cannot any longer be maintained in the light of modern conditions and modern criticism. The operations of God and the presence of the spirit of Christ are wider in their range than any church. We may even say that all influences, ethical and spiritual, which conspire to lead men to the realisation of their divine end partake of the nature of grace. To say this is not to deny that the centre and supreme source of these influences is the God revealed in Christ.

That grace conceived in this large way is essential to man's spiritual self-realisation is clear. For the individual is always dependent on his moral

and religious environment, and is conditioned by it. This is the element of truth in the somewhat contradictory doctrine of hereditary sin, because no one can altogether escape the evil influences which are ever active in the society into which he is born and in which he grows up. On the other hand, it is equally plain that spiritual influences and ideals exist within the social system, and are specially operative in the church of Christ. If there is an environment of sin, there is also an environment of grace. Apart from the presence of grace in our environment, speaking to us in Christian precept and example, we should be powerless from our own unaided resources to develop a Christian character. No doubt there are also more direct influences of the Divine Spirit on the human soul promoting repentance and inward renewal, but this is not inconsistent with the principle that God also works on human lives through the elements of moral and spiritual good in their surroundings. In both ways, mediate and immediate, the divine purpose of good for humanity is being fulfilled.

So stated the principle of grace does not annul human freedom : it is consistent with it. Man is subjected to influences both of grace and of sin, and he must choose to which of them he will respond. Herein lies the great test on which far-reaching issues depend. By responding to the appeal of grace and by entering into the life of grace, he becomes partaker of a larger life and attains to a spiritual self-fulfilment otherwise beyond his reach. There is at least this truth in

the old doctrine of *gratia praeveniens*, and in the assertion that grace is a free gift.

It will, no doubt, be pointed out that the theory here developed implies a co-operation of the human and divine factors in the process of salvation, and so far breaks with the Augustinian and Lutheran tradition. I admit it, and can only plead that any other view involves us in hopeless difficulties. From Augustine's premises we pass logically to Calvin's conclusions, and these conclusions are such that it is almost a moral obligation to revise the premises. Any philosophy or theology which leaves no room for human freedom *ipso facto* condemns itself. But we have seen that the two principles of grace and freedom stand in a complementary relation to each other, and both are involved in the development of the spiritual man. The attempt of speculative thinkers to synthesise these two factors in a fundamental unity do not, as we have tried to show, succeed. In this temporal and mundane experience the two cannot be completely fused into one. Unity is not a *datum* but an *ideal*, a goal which here and now is never fully attained. But we can see that as the spiritual life grows richer and deeper, as character becomes more and more organised towards the expression of spiritual good, the possibility of the will to evil grows less and less real. Hence the freedom of open choice gradually loses its meaning, and the formed will to good tends to become one with the will of God expressed in grace. The ideal unity is at once the reign of grace in the soul and the realisation of

that highest freedom which is not mere choice but self-fulfilment. The great words of Dante in the *Paradiso* express this thought: *In la sua volontade è nostra pace:* in His will is our peace.

VI.

BISHOP BUTLER AS AN APOLOGIST

THE task of Apologetics is always difficult, though the issues which the apologist has to meet vary with the times. In every age there are men who, from one cause or another, decline to accept the Christian religion and criticise it on different grounds. And this is to be expected, for Christianity cannot be made the object of strict proof, and itself makes large demands on faith. When faith is lacking there will be the tendency to doubt or deny; and where criticism is inspired by prejudice or based on misconception, a living religion feels itself under obligation to defend its tenets and to state the case in its favour. It is a token of the vitality of the religion of Christ that it has been always ready to meet attacks and to answer objections.

In the nature of the case Apologetics is not a discipline which has developed by an organic growth from within. For the work of defence is shaped by conditions without: the objections that have to be met arise from the interaction of its cultural environment with Christianity, and cultural conditions change from age to age. Hence the attack shifts its direction from period to period, and the line of defence is changed in consequence. Such continuity as is to be found in Apologetics is his-

torical; and it has to be understood in connection with the independent development of scientific and philosophical thought. As one would expect, therefore, the arguments by which Christianity was defended in one age sometimes lose their force in another owing to changes in the intellectual outlook. As an illustration we may point out how radically the scope and method of Apologetics have been affected by the growth and dominance of the idea of evolution in the nineteenth century. So it is that new movements of thought make it needful to discard older apologetic reasoning, not so much because it is intrinsically inconsistent, but because it has become irrelevant owing to a general change in intellectual presuppositions. It no longer meets present difficulties. As a case in point we may recall the fate of Paley's teleological proof. There is a great deal in the apologetic literature of bygone times which has now only an historical interest.

What I have said about apologetic works becoming out of date is in the main true, but yet there are exceptions. The qualities of any writer can save his work from being forgotten, and this is true also of the apologist. He may bring to his task a spiritual genius and sympathy; he may show such a discernment of larger issues, and he may grasp so firmly the abiding elements of religion, that his words never lose their appeal. We can say this surely of St. Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, and of Pascal's *Pensées*. In some respects it is true, too, of Aquinas's *Contra Gentiles*. And I think

there are qualities in Butler's *Analogy* which should secure it from neglect. More than most books, no doubt, the *Analogy* is not intelligible apart from the historical situation out of which it arose. The premises of the argument are largely due to this situation, and we may admit that at points the argument has lost its cogency for us. At the same time no one grasped more firmly than Butler certain essential religious facts. I may refer to what he urges on the limitations of human knowledge, the lack of demonstrative certainty in religion, and the need of remembering that a grasp of the meaning of the whole is implied in the full understanding of the working of the parts. These are matters which are still true and important. But not less valuable are the qualities which Butler reveals in the course of his discussion. The *Analogy* shows a sanity of outlook and a fairness of judgment which are not common in controversial writing. Butler was superior to the temptation to ride off on a side-issue or to score a merely verbal triumph, and his mind was open and ready to note any serious objection that could be urged against his argument. If his mind was an eighteenth century mind, it was an eighteenth century mind at its best, and the reader of to-day who follows with care his dispassionate reasoning will feel that he has gathered many a fruitful suggestion on the perennial problems of religion.

As already hinted, however, the *Analogy*, to be duly appreciated, must be taken in its historical setting, and Butler's line of thought has to

be judged in the light of the religious situation with which he strove to deal. It is partly in order to bring out the change in the apologetic standpoint since the middle of the eighteenth century that I now venture to make some observations on his work. The *Analogy* itself is an excellent index of the tone and temper of the religious thought of its time, whether positive or negative. Butler's message is not passionate, nor his utterance personal, but he speaks throughout in tones of studied moderation, good sense, and practical wisdom. Yet his personal piety has never been in dispute. He was one with whom conscience was " a daily companion, a close anxiety," and for him it was " the candle of God " in the soul. A grave and kindly man he was ; and, though loving retirement and never a self-seeker, he came to hold high place in the church, and filled his place well. There was a tinge of melancholy in his nature, and an absence of spiritual buoyancy. " Be more afraid of myself than the world," so one of his memoranda runs, but it is balanced by another, " To discern the hand of God in everything and to have a due sense of it." Always very conscious of human ignorance and weakness, Butler was still convinced that the Christian religion offered the best solution of the perplexing problems of life, and this conviction he strove to implant in the minds of a critical and sceptical generation. In developing his thesis in favour of Christianity Butler does not begin by laying speculative or metaphysical foundations. His thought did not move on these lines ; and he

was, besides, much impressed by the limitations of human knowledge. His method is to take his stand on what is generally accepted, and then to show that there are reasons and analogies which should lead our minds to the recognition of the claims of Christian faith. It is just here that Butler's standpoint is sharply separated from that of the modern apologist, for what in Butler's day was common ground, accepted by all, is by no means common ground to-day. The author of the *Analogy* did not defend religion as such, but religion as specifically Christian: the modern apologist has to meet a more radical and subversive criticism.

Let us consider for a little the religious temper and outlook of Butler's day. His was an age which rated comfort and convenience highly, and laid much stress on good sense and reasonableness. It had little belief in enthusiasm, and detested everything that it judged to be superstitious. The natural reason was the general arbiter, and what could not be justified before the bar of clear and distinct ideas was contemptuously dismissed. It was a world that had not much room for faith and had little sense of mystery. In religion Deism held the field, and the Deists, if they loved clarity of mind, were superficial rather than profound. Their cry was for a religion of reason, and this they identified with that "natural religion" which, pure and untainted, had preceded the degenerate religions of the world. Christianity, as they saw it, was infected with human artifices and superstitions, and laden with false accretions which had gathered

round it in the course of its history. It had become something like the sea-god Glaucus of Plato's *Republic*, who was so crusted over with shells, stones and seaweed, that his original form was hardly recognisable. The panacea of the Deists was elimination: strip away from historic Christianity these spurious incrustations and you will lay bare the genuine core, the religion which is pure and undefiled, the religion of those who know, the religion of Nature.

At this time of day we are all aware that the "natural religion" beloved of Deism is a myth; historically no such religion ever existed. But though it was an artificial creation, in which the breath of life never stirred, it is important to understand it if we are to appreciate the outlook and temper of the people with whom Butler had to deal. To define it quite accurately is not easy, for the Deists were by no means agreed on all points among themselves. But, speaking broadly, we may say that "natural religion" meant belief in a God who existed above and apart from the world. He ruled the world as a moral Governor, and the natural order was His order. It was an order in which virtue was rewarded and vice punished. Christian doctrines, like the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement, were dismissed as irrational superstitions, and some of the Deists would have said the same of miracles and retribution in a future life. The net result was that natural religion was exalted to be the norm and standard, and Christianity was only true in so far

as it republished the elementary truths of natural religion. Obviously, in this scheme, no place is left for Christ in creating and fashioning the Christian experience.

Plainly then Butler, in his office as apologist, had to deal with a situation which defined and limited his task in various ways. He was not called on to defend the existence of God, for that was not in question: he had not to refute pantheism or materialism, for these were not in vogue: nor had he to advocate the Divine government of the world, for that was not in dispute. None the less, if the Deists were not to have their own way, much remained for him to do, since some essential and characteristic Christian beliefs were at stake. Butler's general method of dealing with his problem may be put quite briefly and bluntly. In effect, he said this to his opponents: "You hold certain principles, and so do I. But you say, thus far, but no further. Now I am going to show you why, on your own presuppositions, you ought to go further and advance to the position on which I stand." To put the case otherwise: "If you accept 'natural religion,' then there are various considerations and analogies which should lead you to advance beyond it, and to accept Christianity."

To the task which he set himself, Butler brought valuable qualities of mind and temper. He had a clear head, some intellectual keenness, and much good sense. He will not have recourse to *ad captandum* arguments: he will argue the matter fairly, and has no desire for a merely dialectical

victory over his opponents. His aim is rather to show by patient discussion that various converging lines of evidence lead to one probable conclusion. In working out this plan he tries to state the views of those who are opposed to him fairly, and is usually careful not to rate his own arguments at more than they are worth. An attractive feature in Butler is, that he had a very open mind to possible objections to his own views. The objectors whom he makes state a case against himself are rarely "men of straw" set up in order to be triumphantly demolished: they have usually something serious and relevant to urge. In fact, the writer of the *Analogy* was much aware of the difficulties of his subject, and he did not wish to overstate his case. Perhaps this feature of the book was in the mind of Pitt when he remarked to Wilberforce that the *Analogy* had "raised in his mind more doubts than it answered." Perhaps if we spoke our mind freely, we should say the same of some later works in Apologetics! I doubt, however, if we could say of many another apologist what we can say of Butler, that he puts forward a temperate and fair-minded statement, and is careful not to put more into the conclusions than the premises will support. But whatever may have been the difficulties of his theme, the author of the *Analogy* was deeply impressed by the fact that there was a great deal of prejudice abroad against the Christian religion, a prejudice fostered by the narrow rationalism of educated circles. We hear much of the anti-religious tendencies of our own

age, and of the hostility entertained against the Church. But if we are to see facts in their right perspective, we must embrace the past and the present in a large historic view. If there are movements which cause religious people grave concern to-day, the situation has been as bad or worse in former days. In this connection let me remind you of the remark in the " Advertisement " prefixed to the *Analogy :* " It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much an object of inquiry, but is now at length discovered to be fictitious."

In the *Analogy* Butler very properly bids his readers always bear in mind that he is arguing from premises which are not his own. The form and scope of his own argument are determined by this fact. If this simplified the problem, it also entailed the disadvantage that some of the deeper issues involved are passed over. I refer to such questions as the inner relation of God to nature and to human spirits, and the connection of the natural and the spiritual order of things. Thus God and the natural and moral order are simply taken as given, and from these data certain inferences are drawn and probabilities elicited. Here the difference between the modern and the eighteenth century Apologetic appears at its plainest. On the other hand, if Butler's procedure was determined by the situation with which he had to deal, none the less the lines of his Apologetic were those which would naturally commend them-

selves to a man of his spirit and outlook. For metaphysical theories, Butler had little aptitude or inclination : he will set out from empirical facts and test his conclusions by reference to them. Moreover, while convinced that the universe formed a coherent whole or system, he was deeply impressed with the idea that the meaning and scope of this system transcended human knowledge. And he often recurs to the thought that even the parts of the whole of which we have experience cannot be fully known apart from a knowledge of the whole of which they are parts. If we forget this we are likely to form rash conclusions, and Butler felt that there were great possibilities of error if we drew inferences from a survey of a small bit of experience. God's government of the universe is a scheme, he urges, which is imperfectly apprehended, and this principle he knows how well to use in order to obviate objections and diminish difficulties. At the same time Butler's outlook remained intellectual ; and his stress on the limits of knowledge led him to conclude that in religious matters men could not reach certainties, but were condemned to rest in probable conclusions. The point is of much importance for the appreciation of the *Analogy* and demands further consideration.

Butler deliberately takes up a middle position between full knowledge on the one hand and nescience on the other. We do not adequately comprehend the whole, so we cannot fully understand the parts. The writer of the *Analogy*

has no inkling of the speculative doctrine of Degrees of Truth or Reality, and his standpoint is that of robust common sense: a man may know nothing perfectly, but it does not follow that he has no knowledge of anything. The conclusion he draws is, that religious knowledge cannot be demonstrative, but moves in the region of probabilities. Our world is a world of half lights, and we must make the best of the situation. In his sermon on "Ignorance," Butler writes: "If a man were to walk by twilight, must he not follow his eyes as much as if it were broad day and clear sunshine." Under these limitations probability remains the guide of life, as Butler loves to remind us. Hence in religious matters we are thrown back on probable evidence, a kind of evidence, he remarks, which "in its very nature affords but an imperfect kind of information, and is to be considered relative only to beings of limited capacities."

There is something here which does not ring quite true, but we have to keep in mind the environment out of which the *Analogy* emerged. It was no age of vivid spiritual experience, and those who discussed religion were chiefly concerned with weighing the evidences for and against it. The temper of mind was intellectual, and in the court of common appeal reason sat in judgment. Butler did not escape the spirit of the time, and so far follows the method of his opponents in his endeavour to show that there is a balance of probability in favour of Christianity.

If you put the case for Christianity at its lowest, the issue, he thinks, should be that a man "should entertain a serious practical apprehension that it may be true." The procedure reminds one of the sifting of evidence in a court of law. To the objection that probability of this kind does not carry us sufficiently far, Butler would reply that in the nature of the case we cannot reach further; and if probability is the guide of life, we ought to be ready to act on it in religion. He goes on to urge that even if the truth of religion has only a low degree of probability, then, in the absence of presumption on the other side, or in presence of a lower degree of presumption on that side, this very fact should "lay us under an absolute and formal obligation to act on that presumption or low degree of probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt, which is the truth." To put it bluntly, if there is the slightest presumption in favour of Christianity, it is prudent to act as if it were true, for then you stand to gain eternally, while if it turn out to be false you will lose nothing. If Butler does not put it quite so plainly, he does emphasise the matter of prudence. It reminds us of Pascal's wager: *il faut parier.* You have all to gain and nothing to lose by making your bet.

Without discussing now the merits of this curious proposition, I wish to direct attention to the use Butler makes of the argument from a "lack of presumption" against a belief. He inclines to conclude that if a proposition has no

presumption against it, then it becomes in some degree credible, and this in turn may be taken as a reason why we should frame our conduct as if it were true. Yet, in practical affairs, this would not always prove a safe rule. Medical examination may show there is no presumption against a man reaching old age. But it does not follow that he should act as if this were an assured fact, and decline to insure his life against premature death. Butler, however, suggests that the absence of presumption against a future life is a plain ground for acting as if it were true. The fact is that a principle like this is too vague and flexible to prove an adequate help to conduct, and negative evidence can never be a reliable guide in human affairs. To ask a soul "hot for certainties" to be content with a lack of presumption against an idea is to offer it a stone for bread.

This sober balancing of probabilities is very characteristic of Butler and his scrupulous mind, but it is just here that the modern man finds him least convincing. In this he was a man of his age, and the age was not one of historic insight or of psychological discernment. In a time of buoyant faith and spiritual enthusiasm the notion that the religious man must base his life on probabilities or slender presumptions would never be taken seriously. The truth is that the conception of religious faith never comes to its due in Butler's hands, and he had only a defective appreciation of the motives which govern the religious life. For the "full assurance of faith" transcends the realm

of probabilities, nor can it issue from a balancing of arguments. Yet, if Butler failed here, let us remember that theologians long suffered from like limitations. The intellectual element in faith has been greatly exaggerated, and men were told that the way to the kingdom of heaven was through the narrow portal of a correct theology. Instead of recognising theology to be the outcome of faith, ecclesiastics have insisted that the acceptance of a system of doctrine was the condition of a saving faith. This reversal of the true spiritual order has had disastrous consequences.

But here again, if we are to be fair to Butler, we must bear in mind his warning that he was arguing from the premises of others. It was on intellectual grounds that the Deists contended against the claims of Christianity, and it was by their own methods that they had to be met. Hence Butler, in his endeavour to disarm his opponents, was, *ipso facto*, committed to a certain line of apologetic, and, in following it out, he was to a considerable extent successful. Still we are conscious that he was only imperfectly aware of the limits of the method by which he worked and its inadequacy to promote a spiritual acceptance of Christianity where men do not feel the need of religion.

Another point may be briefly touched upon. I mean the practical verification of Christianity. Butler, you may recollect, urges the duty of acting on a probability in religious matters, even if the probability be only a low one. He does not, however, suggest that by consistently acting on

this probability it may acquire an increasing degree of certainty for us. Yet Pascal had emphasised the fact that the steady discipline of the will in religious exercises may deaden doubt and promote belief: *Cela vous fera croire et vous abêtira.* And in our days Pragmatists contend that persistent action sustains and develops belief, and so brings about a kind of inner verification. Men of action, we are told, are usually men of vigorous belief. Such ideas lay beyond Butler's purview. At the same time, if we begin to act on a low degree of presumption, and at the end of the day we have got no further in the way of assurance, the situation is eminently unsatisfactory. To go on acting under such conditions is surely a thankless and depressing business. Moreover, the kind of belief which rests on a slender presumption must, if it remains at that, prove unstable: under stress of intellectual or emotional conditions a slight presumption in favour of an idea may shift into a presumption against it. For belief is more a matter of psychology than logic.

It would take us too far afield to enter into the details of Butler's argument for Christianity. Still it seems desirable to say something on the meaning and scope of that principle of analogy on which he lays so much stress. The principle, as he knows well, can only yield probable conclusions, and he does not forget it. But it is characteristic of his disinclination for ultimate analysis, that he does not critically discuss the method he is to use in order to determine the presuppositions of

analogy and the tests of a good and bad analogy. He simply accepts the Deists' premises that the constitution and course of Nature are an order due to God, the First Cause, and then goes on to show that there are features in this order which are similar to what we find in Christianity, which is a higher spiritual order. If there are difficulties in the latter, there are like difficulties in the former. The limitations of the method are conspicuous, and Butler's arguments, even when they are skilful and effective, are only so in the case of those who accept the premises but decline to go further.

At the same time one feels that for a mind philosophically disposed, the existence of a series of analogies between the natural and spiritual order, if it were true, would raise the question of the inner relation of the two orders. For Butler, it seemed enough to say that both spheres were under the government of God, and, therefore, analogies might be expected. Still there is something merely external in this view ; and to-day at least, one would feel bound to ask if there is no principle of unity underlying the realms of Nature and spirit, if there is no immanent teleology which constitutes the natural and the spiritual orders parts of a single divine economy. Unless this problem is faced and so far answered, the mere presentation of analogies between the two orders, analogies elicited by external observation, and which sometimes may appear hazardous, cannot be completely convincing. If Butler had been more of a metaphysician he would have recognised

the urgency of this problem, and tried to deal with it. Yet he does not stand alone in his attitude. The same lack of speculative vision is patent in a book, much read and discussed more than a generation ago, but about which little is now heard. I refer to the late Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World.* Just as Butler was uncritical in his use of the term analogy, and negligent of the grounds on which it rests, so was Drummond careless and uncritical in his use of the term *law.* Can we attach the same connotation to " law " in the natural and in the spiritual world ? Assuredly no. But even assume that you can, then how is it possible that a principle which in Nature works mechanically should be projected into an order which is spiritual and personal ? Here, as with Butler, we are invited to contemplate two orders, a lower, and a higher which is somehow superimposed upon it, two orders which apparently come together in the world of human experience, but the inner connection of which remains obscure and perplexing.

Butler's *Analogy* would have gained in cogency and breadth of appeal had he made it plain that the natural order from which he sets out was no independent and closed system, but that its real significance is only to be found in its relation to that spiritual order which appears within it and develops out of it. His method of arguing from the course of Nature as a well assured and recognised order of God, leads him sometimes to read more into it than is admissible. But the general

method he follows in developing his analogical reasoning is good. For he begins with the most universal truths of Revealed Religion, and then advances to the more specifically Christian doctrines. Thus he commences by giving reasons for belief in a future life, and then contends that there must be rewards and punishments in that life. Hence he concludes that this present life must be regarded as a state of probation within which the Christian scheme works for man's salvation.

Without attempting to follow Butler in detail, let me briefly refer to his handling of two points, for it casts light on his method. He sees quite rightly that a future life is a fundamental presupposition of the Christian religion, and so he faces the question at the outset of his argument. Here, as elsewhere, he feels himself free to proceed on certain initial assumptions. So he takes it for granted that consciousness is " a single and indivisible power," and concludes that the " subject in which it resides " must be the same. The presumption, therefore, is that the soul, " not being compounded and discerptible," is not destroyed by death. Underlying Butler's treatment is the assumption that the soul is a kind of substratum in which consciousness inheres, a notion which modern psychology emphatically rejects. By magnifying the separateness of the soul he makes the most of the idea that the senses are its instruments, a much less convincing argument than Plato's for the unity of the mind from the correlation of the different senses in a coherent experience.

But Butler is quite right in drawing the conclusion, that we cannot prove the destruction of the body is the destruction of the soul.

This, however, does not take us very far, and so the author looks round for analogies that will advance his case. Every one remembers what these are—the change of caterpillars into butterflies, the breaking of the shell by young birds, the transformation of the fœtus in the womb, with the consequent opening out of a new sphere of activity to the imprisoned creature. The argument as it stands is precarious. The analogy is not really *in pari materia*, and changes within the natural world are not quite parallel to a change from this world to a higher world. Moreover, in the case of man death supervenes, while in the transformations of the animal world there is no extinction of life. Hence the analogies do not really amount to much. Nevertheless, Butler's discussion of the problem is cautious, and, I venture to think, not without suggestiveness, especially his thought that man may enter on the new life in a manner analogous to birth.

That the life hereafter, established as a probable conclusion, will be one in which rewards and punishments obtain is a presumption from the natural order. In that order happiness is annexed to certain kinds of action and pain or misery to other kinds. Butler identifies this *régime* with God's mode of rewarding and punishing men on earth, and readily passes to the conclusion that we may expect the same hereafter. Now we may

agree that, on the whole, goodness brings more real happiness than wickedness in this world. But Butler goes much beyond this, and proceeds to identify human happiness and suffering with divine reward and punishment. The facts do not justify the inference, particularly when we remember that the guilty often bring the worst consequences of their misdeeds on the innocent. Hence we can understand the caustic remark of Leslie Stephen apropos of Butler's proposition: "If punishment is distributed as recklessly as suffering, belief in theology becomes an insult to humanity." It is fair, however, to add that Butler, when he surveyed the spectacle of human life apart from the thesis he wished to establish, had far too sane a mind to suppose that the distribution of happiness and suffering in this world was perfect. He recognised the existence of moral disorders and anomalies, and finds here a reason for believing that if God's universe is a moral cosmos all will in the end "be set right." I may add that his treatment of the theme that this earthly life is a period of probation is, in the main, wise and helpful, and the use he makes of the analogy of education is appropriate and suggestive.

Let me once more repeat that to judge Butler as an apologist with fairness and sympathy, we must regard him in his historic setting and perspective. He shared the intellectual temper of his age, and he is withal a master of dispassionate argument. To a prejudiced generation he spoke a word in season, making plain the need of caution and

careful scrutiny before passing an adverse judgment on the claims of Christianity. It was the kind of message that the time demanded. Yet even in that parched land the breath of a fresh spiritual influence was beginning to blow and to quicken the dry bones into life. John Wesley had begun his career as an itinerant evangelist, and multitudes were flocking to hear him preach. Butler could hardly have been attracted by Wesley's methods, and on one occasion he advised Wesley to quit his diocese, as he had no commission to preach there. This drew from Wesley the prompt rejoinder that his commission was to preach everywhere. As we think of these good men confronting one another, we realise the contrast of religious types, and we reflect how great spiritual movements grow out of faith and enthusiasm, and are not created by clear and dispassionate arguments.

To say this, however, is not to disparage the work Butler did for his contemporaries. To those who went about saying that Christianity was intellectually discredited, he showed how much was to be said on the other side ; and his temperate and balanced reasoning was a weighty contribution to the cause he defended. To the rash and loose religious thinking which were so common, the *Analogy* was a wholesome corrective, and if it no longer meets the needs of a later generation the same may be said of most works in apologetics. Paley's *Natural Theology* and the Bridgewater Treatises came after Butler, and yet they are even

more antiquated than the *Analogy*. The truth, I suppose, is that since the criticism of Kant we have gradually ceased to believe that by a process of reasoning from data in the experienced world, the great truths of spiritual religion can be rationally established. It is right to add, however, that he was too well aware of the limitations of knowledge to suppose that demonstration in matters of religion was practicable or even possible. For men doomed to move in a region of intellectual twilight probability remains "the guide of life," and Butler was content to argue on the probabilities of the situation. Nor can one deny that there is a value in such a mode of reasoning. Some are sceptical about the claims of Christianity, because they judge that the probabilities are against their truth, though they are quite aware that these claims cannot be logically disproved. In such cases it is of use to be able to show that there are probabilities on the other side, and these deserve to be considered. At the same time we realise, in a way that Butler did not, that there are drawbacks to the method which works through probabilities and presumptions; for, if in this way one may do something to create an intellectual predisposition towards the Christian point of view, one cannot thereby create the living faith which overcomes the world and is the anchor of the soul. For spiritual faith has a character and outlook of its own, and it is not born of presumptions however plausible. The recognition of the specific nature and function of faith is one of the features which

distinguish the religious thought of our own day from that of the *Analogy*. Still it would argue a lack of historic insight were we to condemn Butler for this. The fashion of the world has changed since he wrote, and the pressing problem for him was to meet the religious difficulties of his own time. He remains a great and imposing figure, whose work is still deserving of careful study. He was a wise man who sought patiently and dispassionately to execute a hard task, and, in so doing, he has spoken many true and helpful words on the abiding problems of religion.

VII

THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY AND THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

I WISH to take the opportunity offered by the opening of our College Session to make some suggestions on the bearing of the study of Theology on the work of the ministry. Here let me say that I am not using the word Theology of all the disciplines which are embraced in a theological curriculum, but of the special study of Christian doctrines. In the wider sense, of course, every developed religion has what may be called a theology, for no religion which has reached the stage when its adherents consciously reflect on the contents of their faith can dispense with some general statement of the doctrines for which it stands. And if Christianity evolved a system of doctrine, it did not do so by accident, but from the needs of its own spiritual life. It is this theology with which we are now concerned, and, more particularly, with the practical value of this study. To know why a training in this field will help you in your future work is obviously of advantage.

Our own College, founded in the days when the shadow of the approaching Reformation was falling on the scene, was designed to be a college

for the teaching of Philosophy and Theology. This may serve to remind us that during the mediæval period, and up to the Reformation, theological and philosophical teaching were blended. But the gradual emancipation of philosophical thought from the control of the Church made the old close association no longer practicable. And this College, after the Reformation, confined itself to the teaching of theology. Though a change of the kind was inevitable, the severance of the two lines of study may not have been a pure gain. For Theology and Philosophy touch one another very closely, and it is of importance that the student should have a knowledge of both. The attempt made not so long ago to bar the door of the theological sanctuary against any intrusion on the part of philosophy could not be permanently successful. In fact, if we follow the lead of some theologians in our own day, the old study of Dogmatics should be broadened out into something that approaches a Philosophy of Religion.

At present in the Scottish Universities Philosophy is confined to the Faculty of Arts, and is taught as an element in general culture. Its value in awakening the mind and disciplining the intelligence has been long recognised, and the study has retained its importance as a branch of humane learning. The case has been different with Theology. There are few indeed who care to pursue it simply as a branch of historical learning: to all intents and purposes the study is only followed by those for whom it is the avenue to a professional

career. In nearly every case theology is studied with a practical end in view. Sometimes individuals may not find the subject interesting, and study it simply as a necessary part of their theological curriculum. And I daresay theology has on occasion been taught in a fashion which made it seem devoid of all human interest. But the subject is not intrinsically tedious, though to make any real progress in the study you have to penetrate beneath the outward form. For theology is intimately related to the Christian life, and only thrives when it stands in an organic connection with it. At the same time, it is necessary to remember that theology has a practical reference, and the teacher or preacher who is ignorant of it will have a slender appreciation of the significance of his own religion. The study of it is a preparation for a spiritual vocation, and a preparation for an important part of that vocation. This is as it should be. For the studies we call scholarly ought not to be pursued merely for private edification. Knowledge in whatever sphere should be fruitful and have a bearing on life: it becomes fruitful when it is used for the subvention of human need and the furtherance of human good.

I fear, however, some critics will tell us we are taking too favourable view of the function and value of theology. They will tell us that theological learning is likely to prove comparatively useless when we enter the realm of practical experience. They are sceptical about the value of theology, for they think of it as a field where

barren discussions prevail, and the intellectual climate of our time is not favourable for this kind of activity. There is much which is perverse in this type of criticism, though the theologian must not ignore the fact that it exists.

In these days there are cultivated people who interest themselves in art, science, and philosophy, even though their professional work lies in another direction. It is symptomatic of the spirit of the age that few of these betray any interest in theology. It is rather the fashion with many to disparage, or at least to minimise, its importance. In former days theology ranked as the Queen of the Sciences, but movements and tendencies have been at work which have lowered its old prestige. Its claims to authority are freely disputed, and opinions are sharply divided about its value. The critical and sceptical spirit is abroad; doctrines once deemed sure are held up to question; and many think that theologians pretend to know things on which the human mind can reach no certainty. Theologians, they point out, have been famous for their controversies. And if the critic knows his Omar Khayyám he will probably quote the familiar quatrain as expressing his own view:

> Myself, when young did eagerly frequent
> Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
> About it and about: but evermore
> Came out by the same door where in I went.

Doubts come readily to an age which has seen so many time-worn opinions discredited, and there is

a frank impatience of any intellectual bondage to the past.

We have to reckon with an attitude like this, however little we may be disposed to sympathise with it. But over and above this there is a distaste for theology on the part of persons who are not avowedly sceptical; and it is perhaps not hard to guess the reason. At the bottom of their mind there lurks the feeling that theology lies remote from the real and urgent problems and interests of life. In practice, they say, people get on quite well without it. One often hears the remark: "I do not believe in dogmas," and this from individuals who know extremely little about the history of dogma, and who may even be a little hazy about the exact meaning of the word. What they probably mean is, that theological doctrines are old-fashioned and out of date: like the study of antiquities or fossil remains they may be of interest to specialists, but the modern man finds they have little or no bearing on the interests of the day. In contrast to theology, subjects like politics and economics are living studies which have a direct reference to human well-being. If these people do not deliberately attack religious doctrines, they at least treat them with indifference.

The student of theology cannot share these opinions if he is to work at his subject with profit to himself and others. He has an interest in religion, and he probably knows that a religion which has no doctrines would be nebulous and elusive. At the same time he may have an uneasy

feeling that the study has not the importance traditionally claimed for it, and that its relation to his future needs and vocation is not very intimate. He thinks that theologians in the past have often been occupied with obscure and perplexing problems, with questions on which he is not really called to make up his mind, and which do not much concern his future work. He will have to deal with people who have neither much concern nor aptitude for such matters: the religious teaching he will have to give afterwards will, if it is to meet the needs of average men and women, be simpler and more directly ethical. Sympathy, good sense, and a knowledge of human nature are more likely to prove a valuable asset to him.

There is a certain element of truth in this contention, and the argument sounds plausible. Those who are inclined to think in this way are probably fortified in their opinion by the knowledge that doctrinal preaching is by no means so acceptable to an audience now as it was two or three generations ago. I remember once hearing a student of Divinity incidentally remark that about theology he knew very little, and apparently he did not suppose that this ignorance would prove a limitation in his future work. It is just possible that this idea, entertained by an individual a good many years ago, may be shared by some one in the same position to-day. If so it is well that he should be disabused of his opinion. If any one seriously believes that theology is a kind of antiquarian study devoid of human interest, a discipline which

will prove of little service to the man who aspires to do his work well in the church, I venture to say he is mistaken. The initial error, I shall try to show, lies in regarding the subject from the wrong point of view, with the result that its real meaning and importance are not understood. Let me endeavour to make this clear.

The importance of religion is, I assume, common ground for all of us. It is also plain that theology is not identical with religion. One may know a good deal about theology but have little of the religious spirit, while a man may be genuinely religious who is no theologian. But though theology is not religion, it stands in a very intimate relation to religion, and draws its life from religion. Every living religious faith sooner or later expresses its meaning through doctrines, and it must do so in order to be communicated by teaching. In the case of theology, therefore, if we are to understand its nature, we must regard it in its inner relation to the developing religious consciousness which demands expression in this way. We judge theology fairly when we consider the needs and motives which produced it, the forces which maintained it in being, and the functions that it fulfilled. Can we, for example, suppose that compelling motives were not present in the minds of those who toiled to rear the imposing structure of Christian doctrine ? Can we believe that a dogma was originally fashioned to solve an intellectual difficulty and not to express a real and living religious interest ? The best way to answer these questions is to study our

subject as a historic growth. And this historic insight is the condition of a just perspective in our outlook on the field.

I do not, of course, mean to suggest that historic insight will solve all our troubles with regard to religious doctrines. For values change with the historic process, and the value a doctrine had for our forefathers does not settle its value for ourselves. But I do mean to say that this historic knowledge is of great importance for the Christian teacher. The latter, if he is to do his work well, must appreciate the living significance of Christian faith, and he cannot do this rightly if he is ignorant of the process of development which lies behind it. The kind of insight of which I am speaking is not won by the accumulation of data or the patient recording of events. Such work has its use, but it is limited, and something more is necessary. Any sympathetic appreciation of a faith or an institution must rest on the discernment of the inner shaping forces behind it. And in the case of theology to evaluate it rightly we must establish contact with its formative life : we must see it as the growing response to human needs, the expression of human ends which were values. Our theology is the symbol of the continuity of our own religious life with the religious life of the past. It is the same elsewhere : every institution has a long history behind it. To appreciate these things the sympathetic eye is needed, the eye that penetrates beneath the surface and discerns the working of historic forces and the influence of historic values.

So theology, like every historic phenomenon, must be appreciated from within, not from some detached and external standpoint. We must somehow establish contact with the creative elements which have gone to its making; and here sympathy is the prime condition of insight.

I believe much of the prejudice against theology, or the indifference to it, springs from this lack of historic appreciation and sympathy. The present is too narrow a vantage ground from which to judge; and neither with theology nor any other aspect of human culture can we know what it really is without knowing how it came to be. The roots of our life lie always in the past, and this we cannot afford to forget. To say, for instance, that an ancient creed does not satisfy modern thought may be true, but even the reaction against it is historically conditioned. To signalise its defects will not help us to discern its significance or to understand its value; and the fact that we cannot see it in the same light as our ancestors is no sufficient reason for condemning it. The student who has learned to regard religious doctrines from the historic and developmental side knows that, in the nature of the case, the significance and value which men find in them change from age to age. The historic process brings about a revaluation of all values, and shifts the centre of interest. You could not, even if you would, evoke the same passionate zeal for the correct statement of the nature of Christ and his relation to the Father which pervaded the Church in the Fourth Century. Nor

would the discussion of the meaning of grace and the scope of predestination be a concern to people now as it was in the age of Calvin. In this way questions cease to be living questions, not because they have been finally settled but because they no longer stand in the focus of interest. Each age has its own peculiar problems, and mankind can no more return to the past than the man now old can recreate in himself the spirit of his youth. But the historic temper and historic insight will save us from the tendency to depreciate the past, as it will deliver us from the illusion that we can return to the past and find a full satisfaction in it. We study the past just because we wish to understand ourselves and our culture. Let me try to justify this statement more fully in the case of theological doctrines.

The first point to emphasise is, that these doctrines are the living expression of the religious experience and reflection of the age which gave them form. Men engaged in theological construction because they were impelled thereto by the religious needs and aspirations of their time. Behind the theology of an age is the wider life of religion which embraces man's spiritual impulses, the movements of his faith, the upward rush of his aspirations. The life of religious experience sought to express its meaning in doctrines which would give universal and permanent form to its sense of spiritual values. The Ecclesiastical Creeds are great theological landmarks: they embody the religious truths on which men set store, and they

are the symbol of the moving spiritual forces of an age. The Creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon, the Confessions of Augsburg and Westminster, are summaries of what men deemed saving-doctrine ; but they are also historical testimonies which help us to understand our own heritage of religious belief. If they took form after controversy, they were not created by the mere love of argument ; and though we may admire the dialectical subtlety of their definitions and distinctions, we are also aware of a deep and serious concern to find and proclaim the truths which were essential to the Christian life. It is misleading, for example, to regard the Nicean Creed as merely the product of a metaphysical debate : it was really an endeavour in terms of the thought of the age to define and maintain a conception of the person of Christ which would safeguard his redemptive work in human souls. Men judged that they set forth the assurance of the sufficiency and value of this redemption by showing that the character of the Saviour's person guaranteed his work as redeemer. Again, in the Confessions of the Reformation period we have the witness of the religious ideas which were dominant in earnest minds. Doctrines such as justification by faith and the universal priesthood of believers are significant of new judgments-of-value.

Looking back on the long development of doctrine we see in it the shaping power of the Christian experience seeking an adequate embodiment of its purpose and meaning. The fact that in process of time doctrines are modified, that opposing

doctrines are formulated, that reactions against existing religious ideas take place, is in itself a testimony that the religious spirit is striving to give a fuller and better expression to the truth of which it is coming to be conscious. The mind is dissatisfied with the older forms because it has begun to be aware of something better. That new types of religious doctrine are set in opposition to the old indicates the struggle of the religious mind to correct what seems inadequate and to find a fuller expression for its own meaning. Consider, for instance, mediæval theology with its priestly and sacramental system. Did it finally satisfy an enlarging Christian experience? The historic movement of the religious spirit supplies the answer. The widespread revolt against the mediæval system which marks the advent of the Reformation was an inner and spiritual religious movement, a movement which broke the old fetters because it demanded a better expression of its own nature and aims. There is a logic in the history of theology, though the logic is not one of pure reason. The study of religious doctrine is therefore invaluable to one who seeks to gather the meaning of the Christian faith in one of the best of ways, that is, by the knowledge of its historic working.

Let me amplify this statement a little further. What is central and creative in Christian theology is the Christian experience, and this is vitally related to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This experience is the living bond of connexion

which links the church of the apostolic age to the church of the present. In different epochs we trace the interpretations to which this experience has given rise through its interaction with the historic life of the age. And what I would urge is, that the interpretations and reinterpretations which the Christian experience has provoked are bound up with the life of the religion, and help us to understand its nature and meaning. A thing is disclosed in its way of acting, and a man is revealed in the situations with which he is called to deal. It is the same with a religious system, for it reveals various aspects of its inner character by the ways in which it reacts on its changing historic environment. To know a religion, then, we have to study it in its changes. Just because doctrines have grown out of the religious experience, the forms they have assumed are significant of the religion which produced them. Just because theology is organically related to religion, we may say that there can be no comprehensive appreciation of the Christian religion apart from the body of doctrines in which it has gradually sought to express its meaning.

From this point of view we recognise the importance of a knowledge of Christian doctrines for the Christian teacher, for doctrines are significant of the forces which brought them into being. But dogmas, rightly to reveal a religion to us, have to be studied in their historical setting, for they lose in significance by being severed from their historic context. The theologian must have a background

of historic knowledge if he is to see doctrines in a just perspective, and come to some judgment about their relative importance. The man who knows nothing of the part which different dogmas have played in the development of the Christian religion is apt to be narrow in his outlook and to confuse what is secondary with what is fundamental. Think, for instance, of the illiterate preacher. He is often zealous for doctrine, but usually he is incapable of distinguishing the relative value of doctrines or of appreciating the relation in which they stand to the Christian experience. Salvation in his teaching is probably distorted into a means of escaping future punishment. People of this type are usually unable to understand that doctrine is a development and not something eternally fixed, and in the name of true religion condemn any attempt to restate doctrines in the light of modern knowledge. The man who has studied theology in its historical development acquires a sanity of judgment and a breadth of outlook which save him from these extravagances.

It is evident, then, that much is to be gained from a study of theology on the lines indicated. But I hasten to add that, while historic insight is much, it is not everything. More is needed by the theologian than the largeness of vision and the balance of mind which are won by the historic study of his subject. There is an old saying, *pectus theologum facit*, the heart makes the theologian; and there can be little inner appreciation of theological doctrines unless we enter into that Christian

experience which men, using the language of their time, sought to interpret in theological forms. To participate in this experience is to establish contact with the creative life of faith. The theologian who fails to do this is like an individual who wanders in the outer courts of the spiritual temple, but is never able to pass into the inner sanctuary. It is the spirit which makes the form live; and only in so far as we can express our own spiritual life through these doctrinal forms do they become living for us. A doctrine which has ceased to embody an experienced spiritual value has ceased to have a function for the religious mind.

The student who has a sympathetic insight into the growth of Christian theology, who understands how it has been created by a developing spiritual experience, is better able to recognise those elements in it which are still vital and operative. He is likewise better able to see where the old forms need modification and restatement, if they are to prove spiritually helpful to men of a later time. It is folly to imagine we can dispense with doctrines altogether. There can be no developed religion without doctrines, and a preacher cannot discharge the duties of his office unless he teaches some doctrines. But there is only one way in which they can be effectively taught, and that is when the teacher finds his own religious experience in them and commends them to others on the ground of what he has himself felt and known. To persuade others we must ourselves be persuaded. A minister is naturally anxious to meet his legitimate obliga-

tions, and he knows that he occupies a place with definite duties and responsibilities. But if he takes his obligations to mean, that he should proclaim dogmas because they have a position in the creed of the church, though he has no personal experience of their value, then he sacrifices his sincerity and the consequences cannot be good. Sooner or later his audience will detect the element of unreality in his message, and will grow weary and impatient, even if they are not actually repelled. The preacher who repeats venerable doctrines, just because it is a conventional thing so to do, is doomed to fail. Surely it is the " more excellent way " to speak the truths which have become real to him in his own religious life : he has no title to proclaim as his own doctrines which he has never found of spiritual value. There is a revealing saying of St. Paul's which goes to the heart of the matter. He spoke, he tells us, " not in persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and with power." And power is rooted in the inner and personal experience which produces conviction. The Old Testament seer in the valley of vision saw the dry bones quickened to life and movement by the breath of the spirit. This may serve as a parable how spiritual experience makes doctrines, otherwise dead, real and living.

The position of a clergyman in these days is a difficult one, and he often works under conditions which try and discourage him. He has to deal with some who are critical and with many who are indifferent, and to make progress in his task is not

easy. But the man who works in the right spirit and from a pure motive will find that his service brings its reward, though the reward cannot be measured by any material standard. It is essential however that the clergyman should be well equipped for his duties, and an important part of this equipment is knowledge. Ignorance always imposes grave limitations, and ignorance among the clergy must entail evil consequences to the church. Theological knowledge, I have sought to show, will enable a man to bring breadth of view to his treatment of doctrines, and it will enhance his insight into the relative values of religious ideas. And I doubt whether these qualities can be developed apart from this kind of knowledge. It is in your student days that you should lay the foundations of this historical knowledge, which will in after days yield its fruit in an enlightened ministry. To be indifferent to this duty in the time of opportunity is a serious ethical fault. I grant you that sometimes a man who knows little does good by sheer earnestness and force of personal conviction ; but he would be a far greater power for good were he possessed of greater knowledge. For knowledge would enlarge his outlook, temper his judgment, and increase the range of his appeal. And I trust I have made it plain that a knowledge of the historical development of Christian doctrines helps us better to appreciate what the Christian religion really is. The man who is content to be without this knowledge will achieve less in his office of religious teacher than he ought to have done.

On the other hand it would be absurd to pretend that knowledge is the sum and substance of the matter, and especially so if we emphasise the purely intellectual aspect of knowledge. In daily life our appreciation of one another is largely conditioned by sympathy, and in religion sympathy is the portal to insight. In fact, the religious knowledge which counts for most cannot be gained apart from a sympathetic contact with the Christian experience and the Christian life. Only in this way can we know the religion of Christ from the inner side and know it in its renewing and uplifting power. There is a profound saying in the Fourth Gospel which the man who aspires to teach religion would do well to ponder often and carefully : " If any man willeth to do God's will, he shall know of the teaching."

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